

A Concise History of MEXICO

Brian R. Hamnett

THIRD EDITION



A CONCISE HISTORY OF MEXICO

This concise history looks at Mexico from political, economic, and cultural perspectives, portraying Mexico's struggle to break out of the colonial past and assert its viability as a sovereign state in a competitive world. In this third edition, Hamnett adds new material on Mexico's regional and international roles as they have emerged in the twenty-first century, including membership of supra-national organisations (including and moving beyond NAFTA), the Mexican drug war between government officials and gangs, and the immigration and border crises within the United States. He also discusses Mexico's relationship to the outside world, particularly its efforts to broaden the range of political and commercial associations, especially with European countries, the rest of Latin America, and the Pacific Rim through trade agreements with supra-national organisations.

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A CONCISE HISTORY OF MEXICO

Third Edition

Brian R. Hamnett

University of Essex



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Preface to the Third Edition

The first edition appeared in 1999 and the second in 2006. There were substantial changes in the country between these two editions, notably the loss of power in 2000 by the monopoly party, the PRI. There have been further, and perhaps more dramatic, changes from 2006 to the present time. This alone requires fresh treatment and a revision of the opening and final chapters of the second edition. At the same time, Mexico's international and regional contexts have radically altered since 2006, including membership of supra-national organisations (beyond NAFTA, that is), not least of which is the Pacific Trade and Investment Partnership (TPP) and the Pacific Alliance between Mexico, Colombia, Peru, and Chile, both in 2016. Relations with the United States still remain central, nevertheless. Cross-border migration, although diminishing, continues to be an overriding issue between these two North American countries. Migration and the impact of NAFTA on specific regions in the USA were both issues in the US presidential elections of 2016. The extension of conflict with and between *narcotraficante* gangs has had international implications.

[Chapter 1](#) needed rethinking, because the overall issues have changed since the first and second editions, and my perspective has altered accordingly. I reaffirm the original principle of this chapter, namely, that the book should begin with a discussion of what Mexico is like now. In 2012, the opposition party, the PAN, lost power and the PRI has been re-elected. We are now able to assess in retrospect the period of PAN supremacy, and what the return of the PRI might signify. The presidential election of 2018 is likely to have profound significance both internally and internationally.

On the whole, the existing text from [Chapters 2–7](#) stands as previously published. There have been a few detailed alterations, but the structure, periodisation, and exposition still remain valid. One commentator noted that I had failed to mention Mexico's first President, Guadalupe Victoria (1824–9). This is easily remedied. The explanation was my attempt to spare the reader too many details of the complicated early political life of the new Republic in [Chapter 5](#) on the period of 1821–67.

As I was walking through the site of the pyramids of Teotihuacan again a few months ago (for the first time since 1966 during my first visit to Mexico), I was struck by its immensity. I felt that I should say more than I have already (in the second edition) on the Pre-Columbian era. Recent discoveries have placed the first known cultures in Peru earlier than those in Mexico.

In the second edition, I particularly enjoyed constructing and writing [Chapter 9](#) regarding cultural developments. This topic was absent in the first edition. In this third edition, I have transformed it into [Chapter 8](#), putting it before the two new final chapters. These deal with Mexico's experience after the year 2000. I felt it necessary to break up the discussion of politics and the economy, which had predominated until this point, and to bring cultural developments more fully into the body of the text, rather than left to the last, almost as an afterthought. In [Chapters 9](#) and [10](#), my aim has been to present Mexico as a rapidly changing and dynamic North American society. More basic data has been included in these two chapters, giving a clearer picture of ordinary people's lives: material on education, standard of living, the relationship between public and private sectors, infrastructure, and so on.

In the first and second editions, I emphasised Mexican developments in relation to those in the United States, especially after the War of 1846–48. The position of Mexicans in the USA remains a constant issue. In both the first and second editions, I made a point of viewing territories north of the Rio Grande as part of Mexican history until 1848, rather than as US territories which accidentally happened to have a Hispanic past. I continue to think that, despite Mexican attempts at diversification, the particular relationship with the United States, although continually uncertain, is what distinguishes Mexico from the other Latin American countries, most especially, of course, the border issue.

While I have maintained that approach in the third edition, I have stressed here two points which modify this relationship: first, the relative decline of the US position in Latin America from the 2000s, and, second, the increasing importance of Latin American countries' relationships with one another and their integration with supra-national organisations beyond the subcontinent, especially with regard to the Pacific Rim and to Asiatic countries, not the least of which is China.

Parallel to the changes mentioned above, I have updated the Chronology and the Bibliography.

Preface to the Second Edition

In the years since the publication of the first edition, Mexican studies have continued to expand, as the additions to the bibliography clearly demonstrate. Mexico entered a new phase in its history, when in the presidential elections of July 2000, the electorate voted the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) out of power. Mexicans asked themselves in 2000 whether their country had finally become a working democracy, in which opposition parties gained national power and the institutions of federalism functioned effectively. High expectations of a reforming presidency gradually petered out in the subsequent years amid charges of empty rhetoric, unfulfilled promises and political confusion. I have included a brief analysis of the Fox Presidency of 2000–6 in a new [Chapter 8](#). Since I am a historian and not a ‘political scientist’, I make no predictions about either forthcoming election results or future developments in the country.

This second edition retains the structure, periodisation and themes of the first. However, I have amended certain sections, particularly in [Chapter 2](#), in the light of further reading, and corrected a factual error in [Chapter 4](#), which should never have appeared in the first place. At the same time, I have removed several comments on the events of the later 1990s in [Chapter 7](#), which seemed to be important at the time but which now do not. In retrospect, the first edition seemed to lean too far in the direction of economic and political analysis. I have sought to correct the balance by including discussion in a new [Chapter 9](#) on key aspects of Mexican cultural life, particularly literature and cinema. Both of these have had considerable

impact in the international community. This chapter also responds to comment received in conversation that Mexico first struck the attention through its contemporary literature and cinema.

Mexican newspapers can be read on the Internet. 'Latin American Newsletters: Latin American Regional Report – Mexico and NAFTA', published in London monthly, provides detailed information to English-language readers.

I am particularly grateful to Professor Valerie Fraser, Department of Art History and Theory, University of Essex, and Curator of the University of Essex Collection of Latin American Art, for assistance in selecting three images from the collection as fresh illustrations for this edition. Similarly, I must thank Dr Roderick McCrorie, Department of Mathematics, University of Essex, for the use of his Private Collection of Mexican Lithographs. I received considerable help in the technology of picture transmission from Belinda Waterman, Secretary in the Department of History.

Preface to the First Edition

Research on Mexico is an exciting and fast-developing topic. Perspectives are repeatedly changing. Mexico, with a population around 95 million, forms part of the North American sub-continent. Since the early sixteenth century, it has been part of the Atlantic world that resulted from European expansion. Before that time, Mexico was also part of a pre-Columbian world unknown to Europeans. For that reason, the country has a complex multi-ethnic and multi-cultural pattern that continues to have an impact on contemporary events. Nevertheless, anyone interested in Mexico quickly discovers that there are few things for the beginner to read. At the same time, those who perhaps might have returned from their first visit to the country will frequently look in vain for a book which enables them to analyse what they have seen with any thematic coherence.

I first went to Mexico as a research student in January 1966. A great deal of my own history has been lived there since that time, and the country itself has in some respects changed beyond recognition. Yet, at the same time, particularly in the provinces and the villages, and in general attitudes and assumptions, a great deal of the traditional outlook, for better or for worse, still persists.

Approaching Mexican history as I initially did from the geographical perspectives of the centre and south, the core zones of Mesoamerican civilisation, I was always conscious of the deeply rooted inheritance of the indigenous American past. My consciousness of the importance of the pre-Columbian era has grown over the years, particularly since the region I originally studied was Oaxaca, the centre of Zapotec and Mixtec cultures

and still a state with an indigenous majority. My specialisation then was the late colonial era. When I first arrived in Mexico I came by sea from Cádiz after a long period of study in the Archive of the Indies in Seville. I sailed on a 6,000-ton Spanish ship which took two and a half weeks to reach Veracruz by way of Venezuela, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. After the turbulent January winds across the Gulf of Mexico, I certainly did not feel like a Conquistador when I first arrived on Mexican soil. Nevertheless, I had come to Mexico to study the colonial era, and bold decisions had to be made as to how to go about it. In the cities and towns of the central core of Mexico from Zacatecas (where the north begins) to Oaxaca in the south, the richness of a colonial culture transforming from European to American can be immediately appreciated. Cities such as Puebla, Tlaxcala, Querétaro, Guanajuato, Morelia (then Valladolid), San Luis Potosí, Zacatecas and the capital itself all exhibit an architectural and artistic wealth comparable to European cities of the period. My experience as a ‘Mexicanist’ began that way. However, many other tendencies have emerged since then, the most recent being deepening interest in the north. Readers will find the north and the ‘far north’ (currently described in the USA as the ‘American Southwest’) abundantly present in the following pages.

This book adopts a number of significant positions. It does not start in 1821 with the independence of Mexico from the Spanish Empire. It does not assume that in historical perspective Mexico should be defined as the truncated political entity of the period after 1836–53, when the United States acquired half of Mexico's claimed territory. The approach is thematic as well as chronological, allusive perhaps rather than all-inclusive. The book opens with a look at Mexico today and a few suggestions about how it

came to be that way. After this, we shall then go back to the pre-Columbian era for the real historical beginning, and continue forwards from there through a combination of themes and chronology. The periodisation I have adopted corresponds more to contemporary reinterpretations of Mexican history than to traditional approaches.

In attempting a revised periodisation, I still found I had to compromise significantly. I had originally hoped to bridge the traditional historiographical divisions at Independence (1810–21) and the Revolution (1910–40) by a more radical periodisation: ‘Destabilisation and Fragmentation, 1770 –1867’; ‘Reconstruction, 1867 –1940’; and ‘The Monopoly Party, 1940–2000’. However, I still found that the dividing lines at 1810 and 1910 could not and should not be avoided. At the same time, I have compromised by placing these more traditional turning points within the context of my original broader sweeps. It seemed to me also that the collapse of the French Intervention and with it Maximilian's Second Empire in 1867 represented a major turning point in the nineteenth century. This signified the end of European attempts to recover control in Mexico and assured the survival of the sovereign state which had emerged from the War with the United States (1846–8). Similarly, 1940 and 1970 emerged as subsequent points of arrival and departure. The former initiated the period of consolidation of revolutionary changes and provided a symbolic starting point for three decades of economic expansion and political stability; the latter opened the way for descent into three decades of political division and economic dislocation. These lines of demarcation are, of course, subject to criticism and revision. I hope that the question of periodisation will occupy part of the ongoing historical debate concerning the interpretation of Mexican (and Latin American) history.

Colleagues and friends in Mexico and elsewhere have contributed to this book, sometimes without realising it. Many rewarding conversations helped to give it shape. Dr Josefina Zoraída Vázquez (El Colegio de México) has been a continuous source of encouragement and support in many of my recent projects, and always a stimulating critic and discussant. Professor Brian Connaughton (UAM – Iztapalapa) has also been a great help in probing the problems and issues of latecolonial and nineteenth-century Mexican history, not only as a result of seminars at the UAM, but also in regular, three-hour breakfasts in Mexico City, which have ranged across the dynamics of Mexican culture. Dr Bernardo García Martínez (El Colegio de México), author of an alternative concise history of Mexico, pressed home to me the dynamics of the north in a memorable conversation in a Galician restaurant in Mexico City in March 1996, and thereby contributed decisively to my shift in perspective. Professor Paul Vanderwood (San Diego State University), who has been a source of ideas and a good critic over two decades, gave me his hospitality in San Diego at a crucial stage of rethinking and writing early in January 1998. The libraries of the Instituto José María Luis Mora and the Centro de Estudios de Historia de México (CONDUMEX) provided agreeable places of study. Students and colleagues at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, Strathclyde University, and Essex University helped refine the ideas and interpretations offered here. I am particularly grateful to Xavier Guzmán Urbiola and Carlos Silva Cázares, in Mexico City, for their help in selecting the illustrations and maps which form a significant part of this work.

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Mexican newspapers, national and provincial, have, as in the two previous editions, provided immense material for [Chapters 9](#) and [10](#) of this third edition. Similarly, the London-based *Latin American Newsletters: Latin American Regional Reports: Mexico and NAFTA*, has again provided me with a great deal of ongoing information and comment on political and economic issues and trends in Mexico. I have also found *LatAm Investor* (London) of considerable value in identifying current investor perspectives and in setting Mexico within its wider Latin American context.

Abbreviations

APEC

Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation

.....

BRICS

Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa

.....

CIA

Central Intelligence Agency

.....

CTM

Confederación de Trabajadores Mexicanos

.....

DEA

Drug Enforcement Agency

.....

FBI

Federal Bureau of Investigation

.....

FSTSE

Federación de Sindicatos de Trabajadores al Servicio del Estado

.....

GATT

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

.....

MORENA

Movimiento Regeneracion Nacional

.....

NAFTA

North American Free Trade Agreement

.....

OECD

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

.....

OPEC

Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries

.....

PAN

Partido de Acción Nacional

.....

PARM

Partido Auténtico de la Revolución Mexicana

.....

PEMEX

Petroleos Mexicanos

.....

PETROBRAS

Petroleo Brasileiro

.....

PRI

Partido Revolucionario Institucional

.....

PRM

Partido de la Revolución Mexicana

.....

UNAM

Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México

.....

UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

.....

UNS

Unión Nacional Sinarquista

.....

Chronology

2686–2125 BC

Egyptian Old Kingdom

2600–2100 BC

Caral pyramids and residence complex in Supe Valley, Peru

2250–1400 BC

Farming villages in Gulf Coast zone of Tabasco

1500–950 BC

Early Formative ‘Olmec’ Period

1200–300 BC

Flourishing of ‘Olmec’ culture

1400–850 BC

Tierras Largas and San José Mogote cultures in Valley of Oaxaca

500–100 BC

Late Pre-Classic Period in Valley of Mexico

300–100 BC

Cuicuilco, largest centre in Valley of Mexico

200 BC–750 AD

Moche culture in northern Peru

.....

100–600 AD

Maximum development of Monte Albán in central Oaxaca

.....

300–900 AD

Classic Period in Valley of Mexico [Teotihuacan, 150 BC–c700 AD];
Valley of Oaxaca; Lowland Maya: 320–790 Yaxchilán (Chiapas), 615–
721 Palenque (Chiapas) at peak, 850–925 Uxmal (C. Yucatán) at peak; El
Tajín (Veracruz), 100–1100 AD]

.....

500–800 AD

La Quemada (S. Zacatecas) at peak

.....

600–900 AD

Mixtec cultures in western Oaxaca

.....

650–1000 AD

Huari Empire in southern Peru

.....

750–950

‘Time of Troubles’ in central Mexico

.....

800 and after

Copper metallurgy in Meso-America, followed from 1200 by alloys with
tin and silver

.....

800–1170

Toltec Period: Tula a major center

.....

750–1100

Post-Classic Maya Period at Chichén Itzá (N. Yucatán) 9th century to end of 13th century, Primacy of Angkor Wat, Cambodia

.....

1250–1450

Mayapan Confederation (N. Yucatán)

.....

1160–1522

Mixtec Kingdoms of western and southern Oaxaca; later Zapotec cultures

.....

1150–1250

Large-scale migrations, including the future ‘Aztecs,’ mainly southward into central Mexico. Nahua mercenaries settled in Chapultepec by 1250

.....

1250–1400

Military rivalries among city-states in central Mexico

.....

1350–1428

Initial Aztec expansion

.....

1370s

tlatoani (supreme leader) rule with religious foundations established in the Valley of Mexico; dynastic control in the Aztec dominions from 1426

.....

1418

Aztec defeat of Texcoco

.....

1428–1519

Second phase of Aztec expansion: 1428, Triple Alliance of Tenochtitlan, Tlatelolco, and Texcoco

.....

1430s onward

Expansion of the Inca Empire from Cuzco and southern Peru

.....

1458–61

Moctezuma I's successful campaign into the Mixteca

.....

1502–20

Moctezuma II

.....

1516

Habsburg dynasty in Spain: Charles I of Spain becomes Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1519–56)

.....

1519

Hernán Cortés and Spanish expedition arrive on coast of Veracruz

.....

1521

Fall of Tenochtitlan to Spanish and Indian alliance: beginning of Spanish rule from Mexico City

.....

1524

Arrival of first Franciscans

.....

1531

Juan Diego's visions of the Virgin of Guadalupe

.....

1535–50

Antonio de Mendoza, first Viceroy of New Spain

.....

1530s

Onward Spanish Conquest of the Inca Empire

.....

1556–98

Philip II, King of Spain and the Indies

.....

1572

Arrival of the Jesuits in New Spain

.....

1592

Viceroy Luis de Velasco the Younger establishes the High Court of Indian Justice

.....

1615–35

Peak of Zacatecas silver production

.....

1620s

Indian population down to an estimated 1.2 million

.....

c.1635–c.1675

Contraction of New Spain's mining economy

.....

1640s–1750s

Metropolitan weakness in the Americas

.....

1647

Inquisition imposes close censorship of scientific works

.....

c.1649–1714

Cristóbal de Villalpando: 1680s and 1690s, climax of New Spain's
Baroque painting

.....

1651–95

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: Baroque poetry and plays

.....

1695–1768

Miguel Cabrera: late Baroque painting

.....

1670s–1790s

Recovery and flourishing of silver mining in New Spain

.....

1700

Extinction of the Habsburg dynasty in Spain. Accession of Philip V, first
of the Spanish Bourbon branch: 1701–15 War of the Spanish Succession

.....

1759

Charles III, King of Spain and the Indies

.....

1765–71

Official Visitation by José de Gálvez: Minister of the Indies, 1776–87

.....

1767

Expulsion of the Jesuits

.....

1776

Establishment of Commandancy General of the Interior Provinces in the north

.....

1789

Liberalisation of trade between Spanish peninsular ports and New Spain

.....

1808

Collapse of the Spanish Bourbon monarchy

.....

1808–14

Peninsular War, following Napoleonic invasion of Spain and Portugal:
Spanish Cortes and first constitutional system in Spain and the Empire,
1810–14

.....

1810

16 September, Outbreak of the Mexican Insurrection for Independence
led by Fr. Miguel Hidalgo, parish priest of Dolores (Guanajuato)

.....

1811

17 January, Rout of Hidalgo and Allende's Insurgent forces at Puente de
Calderón, near Guadalajara

.....

1811–15

Fr. José María Morelos leads the Insurgency

.....

1812

Cádiz Constitution published in Spain and throughout Spanish-held
America

.....

1813

Spanish Cortes abolishes the Inquisition

.....

1814

May, Restoration of absolutism by Ferdinand VII and nullification of Constitution

.....

1814

October, Mexican Insurgent Constitution of Apatzingán

.....

1815

Execution of Morelos. Vicente Guerrero main rebel leader, 1815–21

.....

1816

José Fernández de Lizardi, *El periquillo sarniento* [*The Mangy Parakeet*]

.....

1820

Military Rebellion in Spain restores the 1812 Constitution and ends the first absolutist rule of Ferdinand VII. Second constitutional period in Spain, 1820–3

.....

1821

February 24, Plan of Iguala between Iturbide and Guerrero, which eventually leads to Iturbide's entry into Mexico City on 21 September, and the Independence of Mexico. End of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. 1822–3 First Mexican Empire

.....

1822–3

First Mexican Empire

1824

First Federal Constitution. First Federal Republic, 1824–35: Guadalupe Victoria, President, 1825–9

1836

Secession of Texas from Mexico as an independent Republic

1846

April, Outbreak of war between the United States and Mexico over the US annexation of Texas

1846

August, re-establishment of federalism. Second Federal Republic, 1846–53

1846–52

Lucas Alamán, *Historia de México* (5 vols.)

1847–8

14 September 1847–12 June 1848, US forces occupy Mexico City

1848

February, Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: Mexico loses Upper California and New Mexico to the USA

1854

March, Revolution of Ayutla brings down Santa Anna in August 1855

1855–76

Liberal Reform era

.....

1857

Second Federal Constitution

.....

1857

July, Reform Laws

.....

1858–61

Civil War of the Reform

.....

1858–72

Benito Juárez, Liberal President

.....

1861–2

December–April, Tripartite Intervention by Great Britain, Spain and France

.....

1861–7

April 1862–February 1867, French Intervention

.....

1863–7

Second Mexican Empire: April 1864, arrival of Maximilian and Carlota

.....

1867

19 June, Execution of Maximilian and Conservative Generals Miramón and Mejía at Querétaro

.....

1867–6

Restored Republic

.....

1876–7

Rebellion of Tuxtepec and accession of General Porfirio Díaz to power

.....

1880

Mexican railroad system linked to US through El Paso (Texas)

.....

1884–1911

Personal rule of Díaz – seven re-elections

.....

1889–91

Manuel Payno, *Los bandidos de Río Frío*

.....

1893–1911

Limantour, Finance Minister

.....

1897

José María Velasco (1840–1912) paints ‘The Pico de Orizaba’

.....

1903

Federico Gamboa, *Santa*

.....

1906–12

Ateneo de la Juventud

.....

1907

Recession in the USA hits the Mexican economy

.....

1910–25

Mexico a major oil producer

.....

1910–11

First phase of the Mexican Revolution overthrows Díaz and secures election of Francisco I. Madero as President (1911–13)

.....

1913

February, Assassination of Madero and Vice-President, Pino Suárez

.....

1913–16

Second Phase of the Mexican Revolution: success of Carranza and Obregón; defeat and marginalisation of Villa and Zapata

.....

1915

Mariano Azuela, *Los de abajo* [*The Underdogs*]

.....

1917

Third Federal Constitution (continuously in force to date)

.....

1920s–40s

Main Period of Mural-Painting in Public Buildings by Diego Rivera (1886–1957), José Clemente Orozco (1883–1949), and David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896–1974)

.....

1924–34

Supremacy (‘Maximato’) of Calles

.....

1925

José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica* [*The Cosmic Race*]

.....

1926–9

Cristero Rebellion

.....

1929

Electoral defeat of Vasconcelos

.....

1929

Martín Luis Guzmán, *La sombra del caudillo* [*The Chieftain's Shadow*]

.....

1929–33

Impact of the Great Depression

.....

1934–40

Lázaro Cárdenas, President

.....

1938

18 March, Nationalisation of the Petroleum Industry

.....

1940s–late 1960s

Economic Expansion: Mexican becomes predominantly urban

.....

1946

Prior official parties, PNR (1929–38) and PRM (1938–46), transformed into PRI, which holds power until 2000

.....

1947

Agustín Yáñez, *Al filo del agua* [*The Brink of the Storm*]

.....

1950

Octavo Paz, *El laberinto de la soledad [The Labyrinth of Solitude]*

.....

1953

Juan Rulfo, *El llano en llamas [The Plain in Flames]*

.....

1955

Juan Rulfo, *Pedro Páramo*

.....

1958

Carlos Fuentes, *La región más transparente [The Clearest Region]*

.....

1962

Carlos Fuentes, *La muerte de Artemio Cruz [The Death of Artemio Cruz]*

.....

1968

Repression of the Protest Movements in Mexico City on the eve of the Olympic Games

.....

1970s–90s

Economic difficulties, despite oil boom of 1977–81

.....

1975

Carlos Fuentes, *Terra Nostra [Our Land]*

.....

1982

Beginning of long Debt Crisis

.....

1987

Fernando del Paso, *Noticias del Imperio [News from the Empire]*

.....

1991

Death of painter, Rufino Tamayo (b. 1899)

.....

1993

February, Re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Mexico and the Holy See, ruptured in 1867. Five papal visits by John Paul II, 1979–2002. Canonisation of the Cristero Martyrs in 2000

.....

1993

Mexico joins the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation group, including China, Peru, Chile and 17 other Pacific Rim states

.....

1994

1 January, North American Free Trade Area comes into effect

.....

1995

Mexico joins OECD

.....

2000

July, Electoral defeat of the PRI and victory of opposition candidate, Vicente Fox for the PAN

.....

2003

June. PAN losses in mid-term congressional elections. PRI and PRD gains

.....

2004

Declining crude oil production continues through the following years

.....

2005–6

Authorisation for foreign companies to operate in offshore oil-fields

.....

2006

July, Presidential Election: narrow win by Felipe Calderón for the PAN

.....

2008–10

Impact of US recession felt in Mexico

.....

2009

June. Crushing defeats for PAN in mid-term elections. PRI gains

.....

2010

May. Calderón on State Visit in Washington criticises high drug consumption and loose gun control in the USA, pointing to their consequences in Mexico, and objects to Arizona's criminalisation of illegal cross-border migrants

.....

2011

Foreign companies enter energy sector as sub-contractors

.....

2012

June, Mexico hosts Seventh Meeting of G-20 in Los Cabos

.....

2012

June, Pacific Alliance concluded between Chile, Peru, Colombia and Mexico

.....

2012

PRI regains power in the Presidential Election: Enrique Peña Nieto
President until the next election in 2018

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2013

February, Peña Nieto's Education Reform policy

.....

2013

April, Peña Nieto visits China, Hong Kong and Singapore. Xi Jinping to
Mexico in June

.....

2013

August, Peña Nieto's Reform Package for the energy sector

.....

2015

June, Losses for all three main parties in mid-term elections, but disaster
for PRD

.....

2015

October, Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) concluded in Atlanta with
Mexican membership

.....

2016

June, PRI losses in state government and municipal elections. PRI loses
State of Veracruz for the first time

.....

2017

June, PRI retains governorship of State of Mexico

.....

2017

16–20 August, Renegotiation of the NAFTA begins in Washington, D.C.

.....

2017

7, 19, 23 September, A series of severe earthquakes with aftershocks struck central and southern Mexico

.....

2018

16 February, Earthquake at 7.2 on the Richter Scale with its epicentre off the Oaxaca coast

.....

2018

1 July, The Presidential Election result was:

Andrés López Obrador (MORENA)	53.19%	30,113,483
Ricardo Anaya (PAN)	22.28%	12,610,120
José Antonio Meade (PRI)	16.41%	9,289,853

The defeat of the two main parties suggests the possibility of a new departure in politics

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2018

1 December, New President takes office

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1

Mexico in Perspective



Mexico may form part of the ‘New World,’ in the European understanding of the term, but in reality, much of the territory included within the present-day Republic formed part of a very old world. Until the end of the fifteenth century and the first decades of the sixteenth century, this old world remained unknown to the inhabitants of other continents. Accordingly, we need to appreciate the diversity and long duration of this pre-Columbian past if we are to explain colonial and contemporary Mexico. This book's structure and the approach reflect that chronological and thematic sweep. The principal objective is to identify the overriding themes and issues, as the in-depth detail may be found in the wide-ranging and growing bibliography of Mexican history. I strongly recommend the reader to plunge into this rewarding subject matter.

Modern territorial boundaries, however, distort the cultural and political dimensions of the pre-Columbian world in Mesoamerica. The geographical dimension of Maya civilization, for example, included areas such as the Yucatán peninsula, which would become in Spanish-colonial times the south-eastern territories of the Viceroyalty of New Spain,

established in 1535, and formed much of the northern sector of the Kingdom of Guatemala. Although Maya sites such as Palenque, Bonampak, and Yaxchilán are today located in the Mexican State of Chiapas, this territory formed part of Guatemala until 1823. Classic Period Maya sites, such as Tikal and Copán, are located respectively in the present-day republics of Guatemala and Honduras. Knowledge of Maya civilization is disseminated today from the capital-city museums of these respective republics, particularly Mexico City, which at the time played no role whatever in its original flourishing. In that sense, the Maya and other pre-Columbian inheritances have been appropriated by the national states to reinforce their national identities, distinctiveness, and legitimacy. In short, the pre-Columbian world has been brought back to life, in order to serve a political purpose in the present day.

Two chronologically distinct processes have been at work since the collapse of the pre-Columbian world. First, the creation of a Spanish colonial political and economic system founded on different cultural principles was imposed upon the existing political and territorial units. Second, a Mexican national state has been constructed out of the former Viceroyalty of New Spain. In these two processes, discontinuities and continuities existed, sometimes incongruously, side by side. The radical difference but underlying persistence between contemporary Mexico and its pre-Columbian and colonial past make it imperative that we do not write history backward from the exclusive perspective of the present, but try to understand the past from within its own terms of reference.



Map 1.1 Contemporary Mexico

Geography and environment help to explain the economic and political developments throughout this historical experience. Ethnic and linguistic diversities have combined with regional and local disparities to shape Mexican culture and define its distinctive culture. A number of obvious contrasts spring to mind: the openness and dynamism of the north, the cultural and ethnic mixtures of the core zone from Zacatecas and San Luis

Potosí to Oaxaca with its colonial cities and Baroque architecture, the Maya world of Yucatán and Chiapas, and, above all, the ceaseless pace of Mexico City, a cosmopolitan megalopolis bursting at the seams. Federalism, first adopted in 1824, and again in 1857 and 1917, was a reflection of this diversity and an attempt to give institutional life to the changing relationships between province and centre, locality and province, between the provinces themselves, and between presidential power, the legislature, the judiciary, the state governments, and the municipalities. Much of Mexican history from the nineteenth century onward has seen the playing-out of these respective tensions in search of a workable balance.

Despite deep political divisions, economic difficulties, foreign interventions, revolutionary upheaval, and, in the contemporary period, the struggle against organised crime, the Mexican Republic has held together as a sovereign state. Even the spoliation of territory in 1846–8 or revolutionary civil war between 1910 and 1920 did not lead to its break-up. The strength and richness of the Spanish language and the survival of indigenous languages help to account for the country's resilience and distinctiveness.

Sovereignty, Territory, and National Sentiment

The Spanish colonial era took Mexican territory much further northward than the limits of the Aztec Empire, which it had superseded in 1521. In contrast to Peru, where the newly founded Spanish capital, Lima, lay near the coast but the Inca capital, Cuzco, had stood high in the southern Andes, the Spanish capital of New Spain had been placed right on top of the Aztec principal city of Tenochtitlán. Mexico City, before and after Independence, became the unchallenged dominant city, avoiding the polarities in Peru. Mexico City became the seat of the Audiencia of New Spain, the supreme judicial body, modelled on the Castilian prototype, although with major administrative faculties and political powers.

Effectively, the northern limits of the Aztec state reached the River Lerma, in the vicinity of San Juan del Río, just under a two-hour drive north of Mexico City. That line, however, did not signify the limits of settled culture. The Tarascan territory of Michoacán and the princedoms of present-day Jalisco existed beyond Aztec control. Furthermore, the sites of La Quemada and Altavista in the present-day State of Zacatecas testify to sedentary culture deep in these northward areas before their recovery by un-subdued, nomad tribes. Although the Aztec capital had fallen in 1521 and its dominant hierarchies removed, the rest of what would become the viceroyalty had to be conquered stage by stage over a long period after tenacious resistance through hitherto un-subdued territory. The Spanish reached northward into Pueblo Indian territory in present-day New Mexico

and south-eastward into the tropical forests of Yucatán, Chiapas, and Guatemala. A prime motive for northward expansion was the discovery of rich silver deposits in the centre-north and north.

New Spain remained for three centuries an imperial subordinate to metropolitan Spain and a part of the broader Hispanic Monarchy. As such it was subject to the general requirements of the Spanish Empire, an essential part of the regular supply of precious metals. The Mexican silver peso or dollar remained a prized item of international trade until well into the nineteenth century, despite the lamentable condition of the Mexican economy for three-quarters of that century.

The Spanish founded a chain of Hispanic cities in the aftermath of their conquests. Sometimes they were located, as new cities, in the heartlands of settled Indian areas, such as Puebla de los Angeles in 1531 and Guadalajara in 1542. Such cities became the centres of expansion for Hispanic culture among the surviving indigenous population. Cities like Guadalajara, Durango, and Zacatecas became the focal points for military expansion northward and for accompanying evangelization. Northward expansion ensured that the Viceroyalty of New Spain would consist of much more than the agglomeration of pre-Columbian polities. The Viceroyalty was subdivided into a number of 'kingdoms,' which were not distinct political entities but simply large administrative subdivisions: the principal of these was the Kingdom of New Galicia, with its capital in Guadalajara, seat of a Captain General, an Episcopal see, and the location of another Audiencia.

The Enlightenment, in particular, stressed the importance of rediscovering and conserving evidence of these pre-Columbian cultures. After Independence, this process continued but as part of the search for a

distinct Mexican historical experience, that differentiated it from Europe and from the experience of other American countries. The foundation of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) in 1939 represents a major advancement in the preservation and dissemination of that knowledge under the auspices of the modern state.

The makers of Mexican Independence, fought for in the years from 1810 to 1821, saw their country as the heir of both the Spanish viceroyalty and the pre-Columbian polities that had preceded it. The Mexican far north already extended into Upper California, New Mexico and Texas, territories which would be conquered by United States' armies in the War of 1846–8. Like much of the north, they were only loosely connected to Mexico City. The formation of the Commandancy-General of the Interior Provinces in 1776 had been an attempt to resolve the problem of defence from the raiding parties of un-subdued Indians, described as 'indios bárbaros,' who occupied much of the territory that was also claimed by Spain. The colonial government's reluctance or inability to finance a military solution ensured that the Mexican Republic would inherit this problem after 1824. When the crisis over Texas secession broke in 1835–6, the Mexican government, burdened by large-scale colonial and post-colonial debt, was in no position to successfully respond to the pressure from the growing number of Anglo-Saxon settlers pushing in from Louisiana and elsewhere.

For Mexican nationalists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Aztec inheritance became fundamental to any understanding of nationhood. Independence, in their view, reversed and avenged the Conquest. The argument that Mexico existed as a nation before the Spanish Conquest was designed to undermine the legitimacy of Spanish rule. As such, Mexico had a cultural and political identity distinct from Europe and a moral right to

defend its sovereignty. This idea provided a platform for resistance to the French Intervention of 1862–7, which sought to re-establish European dominance, although in a different form. Liberal President Benito Juárez (1806–72), who championed resistance, had been born a Zapotec in the southern State of Oaxaca. Nevertheless, he identified with Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec ruler, whom the Conqueror, Hernán Cortés, had put to death. The victorious Liberals of the Reform era (1855–72) portrayed the execution of the Austrian Habsburg Archduke Maximilian, who had presided over the Second Mexican Empire of 1863–7, as both the second War of Independence and the vindication of the Aztec resistance to Maximilian's ancestor, the Habsburg Emperor Charles V, in whose name Cortés had annexed pre-Columbian Mexico to the Spanish Monarchy.

The Revolution of 1910–40 reaffirmed the symbolism of republican nationalism inherited from the nineteenth-century. It became an essential part of the ideology of the monopoly ruling party, which had taken its initial form as the Partido Nacional Revolucionario (PNR) in 1929. The Aztec myth reinforced the ideological position of the revolutionary state. In fact, Octavio Paz (1914–98), awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1990, argued that the Aztec pyramid was the paradigm of the monopoly party state, which predominated in Mexico from the 1930s to the 1990s.

The Federal Constitution of 1917 continued, in part, the Liberal tradition of the 1857 Federal Constitution, but also responded to social pressures from peasants and urban workers concerning the questions of landownership and the rights and conditions of labor. It also sought to assuage nationalist concerns that subsoil deposits, namely minerals, oil, and gas, should not be controlled by private companies based in foreign countries. This Constitution is still in force and its centenary was

commemorated in 2017. Current needs to increase investment in the energy sector, in order to stimulate productivity and expand the sphere of exploitation, may lead to a modification of the Constitution's provision and to the state monopoly of petroleum established by nationalization in 1938.



Plate 1.1 Sunday Afternoon Dream in the Alameda (1947). This segment of the mural painted by Diego Rivera (1886–1957) in the Hotel Del Prado, Mexico City, focuses on the first revolutionary leader, Francisco Madero. The mural satirically portrays Mexican history over the previous hundred or so years. It was an extraordinary balance of design and colouring. In the mural are the artist as a young man with Frida Kahlo, his painter wife, José Martí, the Cuban nationalist, Porfirio Díaz, and the overdressed skeleton ‘Caterina,’ one of the satirist, José Guadalupe Posada's notorious *calaveras*. Rivera and other muralists of his generation such as José Clemente Orozco (1883–1949) and David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896–1974), aligned with the revolutionary left and rejected the colonial era and capitalism. They projected a radical, Mexican nationalism, and reshaped history accordingly. Rivera, in particular, asserted a continuity between Aztec culture and postrevolutionary Mexico. Although the 1985 earthquake damaged the hotel, the mural was saved and relocated in the Diego Rivera Museum at the western end of the Alameda in Mexico City

(Courtesy of Getty, Image 640240238)

Living with the United States

The loss of Texas in 1836 was followed by defeat in the War with the United States and the loss of nearly half of the Mexican Republic's claimed territory. The large numbers of indigenous Americans faced thereafter the US Army rather than the much weaker Mexican Army. Mexicans living north of the redrawn border henceforth became second-class citizens of a foreign power. Pushed off their land or confined to 'barrios,' they faced discrimination in a variety of ways. A Chicano movement would spring out of that experience during the 1960s, which would reaffirm the dignity inside the United States in both cultural and political terms. At the same time, substantial Mexican, other Latin American, and Caribbean migrations to the United States would alter the character of many cities, several of which, unlike Los Angeles or San Antonio, had never been Spanish-colonial or Mexican in the past.

By 1853, a new common border of 3,926 km cut across territory to the immediate south of San Diego down the Rio Grande Valley to the Gulf of Mexico at Matamoros, a vast area which had formerly been part of the same political entity. Ways of life often remained common, despite the linguistic difference on either side of the border. Loss of the Mexican Far North confirmed the shift in the balance of power on the North American subcontinent in favour of the United States. As this latter country grew in strength and influence in the decades following the Civil War of 1861–5, its perspective on the world differed widely from that of the Latin-American societies with which it shared the same continent. For the United States, the

rest of the continent seemed a sideshow at best or at worst a nuisance factor, as its focus turned to Europe and Asia. As a twentieth-century world power, particularly after 1945, the North Atlantic and the Pacific became the key areas of policy attention. Despite periodic and often controversial interventions in Latin-American states, general lack of attention to the subcontinent explained frequent failures of comprehension. In particular, it explained why United States–Mexican relations remained so tetchy for most of the twentieth century. During the first two decades of the twenty-first century, they have continued to be so, further exacerbated by the issues of cross-border migration and drug trafficking.

Fundamentally, the Mexican–United States relationship involves disparities of power and wealth. These disparities lie behind many of the difficulties between the two countries. Despite parallels and similarities, Mexico and the United States operate in different worlds. Their international context and terms of reference are wide apart. It often seems to be the case that the two countries are not seriously thinking about one another. It can even be argued that Mexico spends more time thinking about itself – what it is, where has it come from, where it is going? Few Mexican newspapers have wide coverage of international affairs or even analyses of ongoing issues in the United States. Enrique Krause's comment that Mexico is symbolically an island is very much to the point. There are remarkably few Institutes of US Studies in Mexico and few historians specialise in US history – or European or Asiatic history for that matter. The Centro de Investigaciones sobre América del Norte, based at Mexico City's National University (UNAM), that also deals with Canada, as its name implies, is a notable exception. Lack of resources explains this in part but it is also the result of an absence of a tradition of doing so.

The War of 1846–8 is remembered in Mexico, although largely forgotten in the United States, due to the overriding importance of the Civil War in the years following it. In Mexico, a series of conferences in 1997–8 examined conditions in the country before 1846 and explored the reasons for the defeat. US pressures for further territorial concessions and for transit rights across Mexican territory, in the aftermath of loss of the Far North under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, provoked indignation and resistance in Mexico. Any discussion of the projected McLane–Ocampo Treaty of 1859, apparently conceding transit rights, still arouses rival nationalisms dating from the Conservative and Liberal struggles in the Civil War of the Reform (1858–61). The invasion of Mexican territory in 1847 and the later US occupation of Veracruz in 1914 continue to be excoriated by nationalists. At the harbour of Veracruz stands a monument dedicated to the cadets who fell resisting the invaders, and not far away, is a statue of Venustiano Carranza (1859–1920), leader of the Constitutionalist Revolution, who condemned President Woodrow Wilson's intervention as a violation of Mexican sovereignty. Defence of sovereignty has always been an earmark of Mexican foreign relations, whether in response to the United States or to the European powers.

Although Mexico and the United States have experienced two centuries of difficult relations, all is not a story of failure. Nineteenth-century Mexican Liberals regarded the US federal republic as their natural ally and model. Not even the shock of military defeat altered that perception. It characterised Juárez's dealings with Washington before, during, and after the US Civil War and during the French Intervention in Mexico. At that time, Mexico's diplomatic representative in Washington, Matías Romero (1837–98), established a tradition of friendship and

cooperation over many years, beginning in 1859. The modern-day Presidents of both Republics usually meet frequently, and State Governors, particularly of the border states, are also in regular contact. A major difficulty continues to be the disproportionate position of the two countries, even though Mexico, the territorial size of France and Spain combined, is still a large country and the other third of the three North American countries. When President Ernesto Zedillo (1994–2000) visited the US White House in November 1997, for instance, his arrival had been overshadowed by the immediately preceding visit of the Chinese President, Jiang Zemin (who would subsequently visit Mexico). These two visits highlighted the dimensional difference between China and Mexico in terms of their ranking in US foreign-policy considerations. Repeated failure within US Government circles to understand Mexican problems and their historical roots in depth has repeatedly led to serious misunderstanding. President Felipe Calderón (2006–12) found himself obliged to protest repeatedly against disparaging remarks about Mexico coming from senior military and political figures in the United States.

President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988–94), highly controversial figure at the time, successfully attached Mexico to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993, which originally consisted only of Canada and the United States. Although welcomed by business interests, this treaty, which came into effect in 1994, was criticised by nationalists and by the Left, for exposing Mexican agriculture, in particular, to US competition. Discussion still continues in both Mexico and the United States concerning the beneficial or deleterious results of this association. Mexican motives at the time of adhesion were both economic and political, connected as they were to Salinas de Gortari's policies of opening the

economy and departing from the revolutionary inheritance of the decades from the 1910s to the 1940s.

The border question remains to bedevil Mexican–United States relations. Washington considers its southern border to be a security issue; the Mexican Government has a different perspective, because its prime concern is with the status and condition of border migrants. In 2015–16, nearly 60,000 men and women patrolled the borders of the United States, the majority of them located at the Mexican border. A Border Patrol was first established in 1924 and a special Customs and Border Patrol was set up in 2001. The latter's Mexican section was managed from El Paso (Texas). A marine unit patrols the Rio Grande. ‘Operation Gateway’ in 1994 started the process of building a fence to keep out illegal cross-border immigration across the Western California strip, which was relatively easy to cross. This fence started out at sea and ran for 19 km, terminating at the edge of the mountains, thereby forcing potential migrants to cross exposed mountains or deserts at great personal risk. Under President George W. Bush (2001–9), the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of December 2004 provided for the increase of border agents to 20,000 staff by 2010. Early in 2013, 22,000 Agents were operating in cooperation with the National Guard, the Army, Homeland Security, and local agents.

The Secure Fence Act of October 2006 was designed to extend fencing by 1,100 km, equipping it with bright lights and survey cameras. Infra-red night readers, electronic sensors, and drones would follow. Border Patrol would use light aircraft, motorcycles, bicycles, and horse-riding to apprehend illegal migrants. Seen from the air, as a correspondent of the London *Financial Times* reported in January 2013, the border apparatus resembled more the divide between two hostile countries than one between

two states at peace with one another. Private security firms and local vigilante groups also scanned the border zone for migrants. On the other hand, from Tucson, for instance, volunteers from church-based groups searched the desert trails to rescue dehydrated migrants overcome by heat.

Early cross-border migration resulted from the late-nineteenth-century land policies of the regime of Porfirio Díaz (1884–1911) and conditions in northern Mexico during the Revolutionary era after 1910. Much mid-century border crossing resulted from the US *bracero* program of 1942–64, which allowed Mexican ‘wet-backs’ in, at first during wartime to substitute for absent agricultural workers, particularly in California and Texas. Incomplete or failed agricultural-reform programs led to the virtual reproduction of Mexican villages north of the border and within US cities. Although scarcely regarded as such in US perspectives, this resettlement of home communities, chiefly from Jalisco, Michoacán, or Oaxaca, resembled the earlier migrations from English counties such as Essex and Suffolk, which reproduced themselves in New England. In January 1998, for example, Jalisco was reputed to be the Mexican State with the largest number of migrants: 1.5 million people originating from there lived mainly in California, Chicago, and Washington, DC. Such migrants were sending US\$800 million back into the Jalisco economy. In the following two decades, Michoacán and Guanajuato reached and even surpassed Jalisco's total number of migrants. Leaving aside Oaxaca, we should note that none of these other three states were among the most impoverished or backward in Mexico.

The United States began to put a check on this transit in 1986 with the Immigration Reform and Control Act, which was widely regarded in Mexico as a form of punishment for the independent stance it was adopting

on the Central-American crisis of the time. In 1994, the first administration of President Bill Clinton (1993–2001) attempted to stem migration by increasing patrols and constructing more barriers, and instituting ‘Operation Hard-Line’ in the following year. The incongruity of an immigrant nation such as the United States constructing a wall or barriers to keep out other immigrants, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall in Europe in 1989 and the freeing of barriers across the former Soviet bloc to the outside world, was lost on no one inside Mexico.

The issue of a fence or wall between the two (otherwise friendly) republics had been a contentious from the 1990s. Illegal border crossings into the United States explained why. Several US presidential election campaigns, notably in 2016, made this a focus. Already in 1998, the United States had fixed a metal barrier across the Tijuana side of the Pacific Ocean beach, stretching 50 m into sea, to prevent migrants swimming into the United States. After inauguration, President Donald Trump declared his intention on 28 February 2017, to construct a wall along the entire 1,989 mile-border, for which Mexico would be required to pay. The Mexican government and opinion indignantly rejected such a notion.



Plate 1.2 The Border Wall between Mexico and the United States, 2017. As President-elect, Donald Trump stated on 11 January 2017: ‘we don't even have a border. It's like an open sieve.’ After inauguration, he declared in an address to both Houses of Congress, on 28 February: ‘We shall build a great – great – wall along our southern border.’ This border is, in many respects, artificial, because many families span the border and much transit and trade is conducted across it. The way of life in the borderlands is remarkably similar, despite differences of official language and government. Cross-border migration, in any case, has decreased since the US recession in 2008

Drug Trafficking and Money Laundering

A US Government Report in 2008 stated that three-quarters of the world's cocaine production was destined for the US market. Early in the following year, the Director of the FBI argued before the Senate Intelligence Committee that the activities of Mexican drug cartels represented the main criminal threat to the United States. The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency agreed, pointing out that divisions inside the Mafia had opened the way for Mexican cartels to gain control of the international drug trade. The FBI identified seven cartels which controlled distribution and described the Tijuana gang as the most dangerous, its alleged leader on the 'most-wanted' list in the United States.

A joint Mexican–US anti-narcotics strategy usually proved difficult to implement. Even so, the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) operated in Mexico in cooperation with reliable security officers.

The penetration of the gangs into political and security systems was the most serious revelation of the late 1980s and 1990s. This could reach the highest levels. General Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo, head of anti-drug operations, was arrested in February 1997 for allegedly protecting one of the principal cartels. He was convicted of hoarding high-calibre weaponry and had apparently been involved in inter-gang warfare. He was sentenced in March 1998 to thirteen years' imprisonment. Newspapers regularly reported the suspected drug involvements of political figures, such as state governors. In January 1998, the Procuraduría General de la República (PGR), the Attorney General's Office, ordered the arrest of the former

Governor of Jalisco, Flavio Romero de Velasco (1977–83), on the grounds that while in office and afterward he had maintained contacts with *narcotraficantes*. He was sent to the federal maximum-security prison of Almoloya in the State of Mexico. One of his contacts allegedly transferred money from the Cayman Islands to Mexico and used front accounts for money-laundering. At that time, the PGR was also investigating the relationship of Mario Villanueva Madrid, Governor of the State of Quintana Roo, with the Ciudad Juárez Cartel, allegedly operating in the state and receiving cocaine from Colombia.

The murder rate in several states, notably Chihuahua and Sinaloa, escalated alarmingly through the 2000s. It had risen to 97 per 100,000 in the former state, which in 2010 had a total population of 3.2 million. Equally alarming has been the murder of journalists, of whom eighty-eight were killed between 2000 and 2015 and a further seventeen have disappeared. It is not known which group or agency has been responsible. The Mexico City newspaper, *El Universal*, on 1 January 2009, put the total number of gang-related murders during the previous year at 5,630, double the total for 2007; the PGR preferred the slightly lower figure of 5,376. Much of the violence in Sinaloa stemmed from the feuding between El Chapo gang and the Beltrán Leyva brothers. According to the PGR, gangs controlled around eighty municipalities, particularly in Michoacán and Tamaulipas. The number of kidnappings and extortions across the country was unknown. Drug cartels were often involved in such abductions, and allegations abounded that senior police officers had contacts with organised crime. In September 2014, forty-three trainee teachers were abducted and murdered in the district of Iguala in the turbulent State of Guerrero. It appeared that local authorities were involved in this. It has been suggested that the

abduction may have been related to a struggle between two rival gangs for the control of opium and heroin production and the distribution routes, with Iguala strategically placed in that respect. The scandal put a blight on the administration of Enrique Peña Nieto, who had taken office in December 2012. Mexico City, which for a time gained a dubious reputation as ‘kidnap capital’ of Latin America, was later reputed to be the safest place in Mexico, when compared to drug-gang warfare in the high murder-rate states.

The Higher Profile of the Catholic Church

Salinas, in February 1993, re-established relations between the Mexican Republic and the Holy See. They had remained broken from the time of Juárez, in 1867, because the papacy had condemned the Reform Laws of 1855–60, which confiscated ecclesiastical properties, instituted civil marriage, and separated Church and State, and then had recognised Maximilian as Emperor of Mexico. Serious conflicts between Church and State in Mexico in 1873–6 and again in 1926–9 ensured that relations would remain interrupted. The Constitution of 1917, moreover, forbade the formation of clerical political parties and confined the Church to only a limited role in education.

Restoration of relations introduced a new dimension to national political life. It also allowed free expression of religious practice in public places, which had hitherto been frowned upon by the authorities and prohibited under the Reform Laws. Anti-clericals feared a recrudescence of ecclesiastical intervention in politics and civil affairs.

Inevitably, the Catholic hierarchy gained a higher profile after the restoration of diplomatic relations. Pope John Paul II (1978–2005) attributed great importance to the role of Latin America in the Catholic Church and to Mexico, given its history of anti-clericalism. John Paul's attention to Mexican issues and attempts to bolster the Mexican Church never wavered since his first visit shortly after his elevation. In 1992, he beatified the Martyrs of the *Cristiada* in a Solemn Mass of Christ the King

in Rome. These were some twenty priests and lay people who had been murdered by sections of the Federal Army during its repression of the Jalisco countryside at the time of the *Cristero* Rebellion of 1926–9. None of the martyrs had actually taken part in the armed rebellion. The Polish pope canonised them in 2000. He regarded them as victims of the modern revolutionary state. The Mexican hierarchy sponsored the creation of a new shrine in the village of Santa Ana Guadalupe, not far from the great pilgrimage centre of San Juan de los Lagos in the Altos de Jalisco. Santa Ana had been the home of Padre (now Santo) Toribio Romo. The priest had been dragged out of hiding and shot dead at the age of twenty-seven in front of his sister by a Federal cavalry patrol on the lookout for priests and those working closely with them in defiance of government prohibition of the Catholic rites in 1927.

When the ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) lost power in the presidential elections of 2000, it was unclear at first which wing of the incoming Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN), which had a strong clerical element, would prevail. In the government of President Vicente Fox (2000–6), however, it quickly became evident that the business wing would take precedence over any attempted religious vindication, desired as it might have been by the Catholic Right.

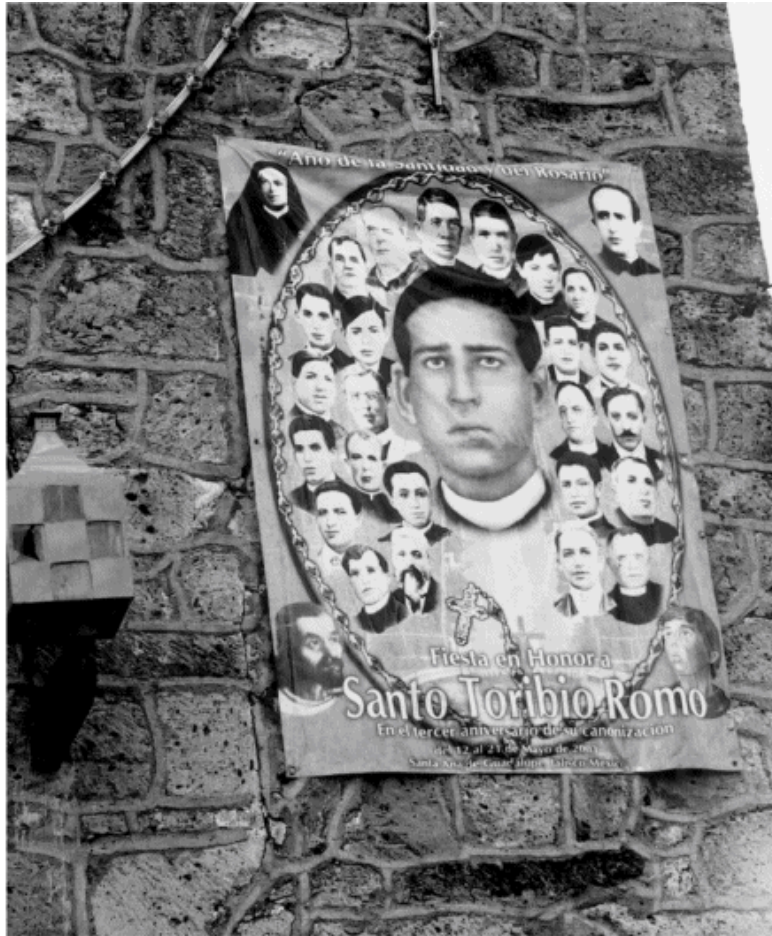


Plate 1.3 The Shrine to the Martyrs of the Cristero Rebellion (1926–9) at Santa Ana de Guadalupe in the Altos de Jalisco. This is situated in the family home of the young priest, Toribio Romo, born in the district of Jalostotitlán in 1900 and murdered by federal forces in February 1928 during the repression of the *Cristero* Rebellion. Pope John Paul II canonised him as a Martyr of the *Cristero* War in 2000. His cult has spread across the US border, as he is unofficially venerated by migrants crossing into the United States, undiscovered by border patrols or lost in the desert, and by soldiers of Mexican origin surviving in the US interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq

(Author's photograph, September 2003)

The new administration made no attempt to undo the Reform Laws, despite attempts to denigrate the character and legacy of Juárez among the wilder elements of the PAN. The Mexican Church, for its part, continued to press for religious education in state primary schools, criticise secular education, denounce liberal sexual practices, and inveigh against controversial films – such as *El crimen de Padre Amaro* (2002) – or TV programs. At the same time, it pressed strongly for the canonisation of Juan Diego, the Indian declared to have had visions of the Virgin of Guadalupe in 1531. An outgoing prior of the Guadalupe religious community, however, had incurred Vatican criticism for expressing doubt late in 1999 at even the existence of Juan Diego, let alone the visions attributed to him.

In August 2002, Pope John Paul paid his fifth visit to Mexico. Upon arrival, President Fox made the unprecedented and controversial gesture of kissing the Pope's ring, an action which went against the entire *juarista* tradition. During the course of this visit, John Paul canonised Juan Diego and beatified two Zapotec Indians, who had been killed by other villagers for denouncing the celebration of clandestine rites to the Spanish colonial authorities. Even though large crowds welcomed the canonisation, both of these actions by the Pope received considerable criticism.

In a statement on 1 February 2004, the then Mexican Primate, Cardinal Norberto Rivera, who favoured a confrontational approach, declared that abortion and emergency contraception (the ‘morning-after pill’) constituted worse crimes than drug-trafficking. Rivera then attributed the ensuing outcry to the surviving current of anti-clericalism in Mexican society. He stated that packets of condoms should carry a health warning like cigarette packets. From there, he condemned Mexicans ‘who let themselves be seduced by liberal education,’ pitting himself, thereby, against the tradition

of secular education derived from the Reform era. The emphasis continued to be on the lack of observance in Mexico of the moral precepts taught by the clergy. He blamed the ills of contemporary Mexico on homosexuals, feminists, and other ‘minorities.’ At the same time, individual bishops criticised the neo-liberal economic model promoted by the Salinas administration and continued thereafter. This gave the impression that Church leaders were attacking all forms of liberalism from both the Left and the Right at the same time, a tone consistent with that of the Holy See under John Paul.

Between 1950 and 2000, the proportion of self-declared Catholics in Mexico fell in relation to the overall growth of population. Similarly, the number of vocations also declined in relative terms, although it remained higher in Mexico than in Europe and the rest of Latin America. Out of an estimated 15,000 priests in a country of around 115 million inhabitants, some 2,500 were at the retiring age of seventy-five years in September 2003.

Despite the overriding problems of drug-trafficking, gun battles in major towns and cities, kidnapping, unexplained disappearances, the high murder rate in some parts of the country, the infiltration of town councils and state-governments by the Cartels, and the evidence of widespread poverty, the ecclesiastical hierarchy chose to single out same-sex relationships as their prime target. The Partido Revolucionario Democrático (PRD) Governor of the Federal District, Marcelo Ebrard (2006–12), secured from the Supreme Court acceptance of the principle that same-sex couples should enjoy the same civil rights as heterosexuals under the Constitution. Cardinal-Archbishop Sandoval denounced this decision in mid-August 2010, arguing that Ebrard and unnamed international organisations had

bribed the Court. On 18 August, Ebrard sued the Archbishop for libel, but he refused to retract the statement.

During the 2010s, the issue of civil legitimisation of same-sex relationships rose to the surface in Mexico, where the national government after the return of the PRI to power in 2012 adopted a sympathetic position. In June 2015, the Supreme Court decided that same-sex unions were a basic human right under the terms of article 4 of the 1917 Constitution. President Peña Nieto and his Interior Minister, M. A. Osorio Chong, adopted this position at the federal level. Cardinal Rivera took this to be an attack on Christian doctrine. He authorised the organisation of a campaign, described as a Crusade, against same-sex unions on the grounds that they detracted from the sanctity of marriage, which could only be between a man and a woman. He encouraged protest marches in major cities. Pope Francis lent his support to this movement. Gay-Rights leaders regarded this campaign as tantamount to an incitement of hatred, if not violence, against their supporters. Rivera (who retired in 2017), at the same time, was declaring that God had already forgiven priests who had abused young people. A 'Defenders of the Family' protest march to the centre of Mexico City late in September 2016, which was supposed to mobilise a million people, turned out in reality to consist of much fewer than that.

A Perspective on the Present

There has always been a tendency both in Mexico and among Mexicanists to view the country in isolation from anywhere else. This amounts to an unnecessary distortion. While we certainly need to know more about the external contacts of pre-Columbian societies, which may well prove to be greater than has been supposed, post-Conquest Mexico has always been integrated into the wider world, although in varying degrees. Political, commercial, and cultural exchanges expanded considerably from colonial times. Despite some retrocession in the decades immediately following Independence, later nineteenth-century Mexico, especially after the construction of a railroad system, increasingly became integrated into the North Atlantic capitalist world of investment and infrastructure improvement. The Díaz régime intended that European investors should complement and compete with their US counterparts. The Revolution of the 1910s reacted against foreign penetration of the economy. On the other hand, President Calles (1924–8) faced the need to stabilise the economy and the financial system through re-establishing working relationships with foreign investors and their governments. In [Chapters 8](#) and [10](#), we shall examine the very broad contacts contemporary Mexico has with the outside world – and on many levels – to mutual benefit.

During the 2000s, it became increasingly clear that the United States had lost the hegemony in Latin America, which had lasted from the end of the nineteenth century. We might regard the Spanish–American War of 1899–1901 over the independence of Cuba as the symbolic point of origin.

By 2010, the loss of dominance had become irreversible, as Latin-American states, whether acting individually or through supra-national organisations took their own initiatives and made their own arrangements outside the area. Until the deep recession of 2015–16 and ensuing political crisis, Brazil appeared to be assuming the role of principal Latin-American state, outpacing Mexico for that role. The success or failure of Mexico's attempts after 2012 to recover influence both in Latin America and beyond may depend on several salient factors: the recovery of the energy sector and the diversification of investment, an ability to increase productivity, the broadening of the range of taxation, the adaption of technology across the manufacturing sector, the improvement of educational levels, the eradication of extreme poverty, and, last but not least, success in the struggle against the narcotics cartels.

The London-based *LatAm Investor* referred in its May 2017 issue to Latin America's 'Golden Decade', from 2003 to 2013, during which most countries increased their Gross Domestic Product and were able to reduce the scale of severe poverty. This was also the decade in which China substantially expanded its role in the subcontinent, at a time of declining US interest in the area. China replaced the United States as the main trading partner of Brazil, Argentina, Chile, and Peru. Such Foreign Direct Investment in Latin America, principally concentrating on infrastructure and energy, considerably reversed prior US economic hegemony, which had superseded British predominance during the 1930s and 1940s. Chinese investments were linked to commodities and loans. Mexico, during this 'Golden Decade' remained largely an exception to the trends set in South America, wary of Chinese competition in the US market. After 2013, however, the main Latin American economies, that had generated so much

optimism among foreign investors, passed through difficult periods. Mexico was seriously disadvantaged by the decline of world oil prices, which did not begin to rise again until 2016. This, combined with deepening uncertainty with regard to relations with the United States from that year onward, led to currency instability and investor reticence. Chinese interest in Latin America, however, did not recede, and by 2017 was clearly intending to include Mexico.

2

The Pre-Columbian Era



Migrating hunters in pursuit of animals during the Ice Age may have crossed the land bridge from Asia, now the Bering Straits, into the American continent some 12,000 years ago. Controversy still surrounds both provenance and dating, although this seems to be the preferred explanation for the populating of the Americas. At the end of the Ice Age, the land was less able to sustain large, foraging population groups. With the extinction of the hunted mastodons around 8000 BC, hunters needed to find a new balance between nutritional needs and their environment's food potential. For several thousand years, however, foraging and farming coexisted, before maize cultivation became the basis of the economy in Meso-America. The domestication of plants required regular rainfall or proximity to fresh water. Similarly, the need for tools led to the development of trade routes, especially between highland sources of obsidian, the principal cutting agent, and the tropical lowlands with their diversity of foodstuffs.

Agriculture possibly developed in Mesoamerica between 5500 and 3500 BC, considerably later than in Syria and Mesopotamia, where

cultivation of wheat began around 9000 and 8000 BC, respectively, and in the Indus Valley, where barley cultivation began around 7000 BC. In the central Mexican Basin, pre-ceramic society, a mixture of sedentary and semi-sedentary peoples, existed possibly around 4000 BC, taking nourishment from the plant and animal life around the extensive lakeshore of the Valley of Mexico. At an altitude of 2,200 m, the temperate climate and abundant water on this *altiplano* created by volcanic activity would provide the basis for settled life. So far, however, the earliest known permanent villages of farmers cultivating maize date from 2250 to 1400 BC in tropical Tabasco on the southern Gulf coast. Small villages with varied diet and using obsidian, a black, volcanic glass, and basalt tools grew up on the river levees. San Lorenzo (1500–1350 BC) was the principal centre.

The core of the Olmec culture lay in the area of the Papaloapan, Coatzacoalcos, and Tonalá Rivers. In the Early Formative Period (1500–900 BC), urban areas with many specialized buildings and a social stratification emerged out of a previously egalitarian farming society. The sculptures had a ritual and symbolic significance, which arose immediately from local agricultural and artisan society. Although naturalistic rather than abstract, they frequently portrayed a spiritual state rather than a specific physical condition, and were executed by skilled craftsmen, evidently spiritually prepared for the task, in highly polished jade, jadeite, or serpentine. Archaeologists have so far identified the seventeen permanent settlements of the Tierras Largas complex, northeast of Monte Albán, in the Valley of Oaxaca during the period 1400–1150 BC, and the San José Mogote area (1150–850 BC) on the River Atoyac in the north-eastern part of the Valley in the Etla district, as the earliest population centres on that region. Both of these centres have yielded large ceramic finds. San José, the

focus of a network of eighteen to twenty villages, showed evidence of a more stratified society and inter-regional commerce. Olmec symbols appeared in the decorative use of the fire-serpent and the were-jaguar.

In the period of 900–500 BC the population in the central highlands increased rapidly with the result that larger and more numerous villages appeared, despite the continued decline of the lake level in the Valley of Mexico. Elites began to emerge and the number of local chiefdoms grew, making alliances necessary. At the same time, exchange networks expanded. In the Late Pre-Classic Period (500–100 BC), urban centres arose as the population concentrated around central villages, which had public buildings, including pyramids. More land was cleared from forest and irrigation used more extensively, in order to make farming more productive. Favourable agricultural conditions on the southern lakeshore accounted for the rise of Cuicuilco, which became the largest centre by 300 BC, covering some 400 hectares and sustaining a population around 20,000 inhabitants. This centre had a 27-m high circular and stone-faced pyramid of 80 m diameter. Large irrigation canals and eleven other pyramids have been discovered beneath the lava deposited in the volcanic activity, which destroyed the site around 100 BC. Cuicuilco may possibly have been Mesoamerica's first city state, although others, such as Tlapacoya and Cholula, also existed at that time in central Mexico.

During the Classic Period (AD 300–900) a great cultural flowering took place throughout Mesoamerica – in the Valley of Oaxaca, at Teotihuacan, in the lowland Maya districts, and on the Gulf coast, notably at El Tajín in Veracruz, which was occupied from AD 1000 to 1100. Commercial networks continued to expand, linking the highland areas to the lowlands and coasts, both from western Mexico through the central

valleys to the Gulf coast and southwards along the Papaloapan River to the Petén jungles, highland Guatemala, and the Pacific coastal areas from Chiapas to El Salvador.

The Olmecs

There is an ongoing debate concerning whether Olmec culture, which flourished between 1200 and 300 BC in the Gulf lowlands, represented the base from which later cultures developed in different geographical directions, or whether it was simply a culture parallel to others which flourished contemporaneously. Although the Olmecs never apparently formed a great empire, their political organization and religious system, long-distance commerce, astronomy, and calendar reached sophisticated levels. Their linguistic group was probably Mixe-Zoque, which was related to the Maya languages. Although Olmec influences may be found across central and southern Mesoamerica, no evidence exists for any political control beyond the Gulf base area. Olmec culture flourished from different sites for a period of some 600 years from c. 1200 BC, a chronology established by radiocarbon tests in the mid-1950s. The Olmecs appear to have been the first to construct large-scale ceremonial sites. Their name is a misnomer, based on the later Aztec name for the southern Gulf zone – Olman (the land of rubber) – and first applied to them in 1927. Having vanished for over two millennia, evidence of Olmec culture slowly began to re-emerge from the swamps and forests into which it had sunk. In 1862, the first gigantic Olmec head was uncovered in the Veracruz district of San Andrés Tuxtla. Axes and jade figures followed at later dates. Then, in 1925, Frans Blom and Oliver La Fage made further decisive discoveries in the Laguna de Catemaco, a crater lake near the volcano of Pajapan. The heads were carved from basalt boulders flung from erupting volcanoes: a fiery

birth from the centre of the earth. Transporting these immense boulders by land and river from the Tuxtla Mountains and then transforming them into ritual shapes demonstrated the power the Olmecs derived from their relationship to supernatural sources.



Plate 2.1 Olmec Sculpture at the Jalapa Anthropology Museum (Veracruz). Discovered in 1945 at the San Lorenzo site in the southern Veracruz district of Texistepec, south-west of Minatitlán, this and other basalt heads date from 1200 to 1000 BC. San Lorenzo, an artificial mound with a gigantic platform, was one of the oldest Olmec sites

(Photograph by M. A. Anipkin, 2016)

Shaman-kings, emerging from the elite, interpreted the cosmos, creation, and the cycle of human life. As the ceremonial sites required the organization of a large labour force, a state organization became necessary, and took the form of chiefdoms exercising control over limited territories. The focal points were the San Lorenzo and La Venta sites, which flourished from 1200 to 900 BC and 900 to 600 BC, respectively. Michael D. Coe

worked on the former site in 1964–7: San Lorenzo consisted of an artificial mound about 1,200 m long with many monuments on it raised above the swamps. The site was the nexus of a series of small villages and shrines beyond its circumference. Alfonso Caso and Ignacio Bernal (Director of the National Institute of Anthropology and History [INAH] from 1968 to 1971) worked on Olmec sites during much of the 1960s; Bernal suggested linguistic links with the early Zapotec culture of the Valley of Oaxaca. In chronological terms, Tres Zapotes was the last significant Olmec site, though it was researched in 1938–9, before San Lorenzo and La Venta.

The Olmec belief system pointed to a cosmos in which all elements and creatures were infused with a spiritual power. This energy gave the universe its momentum, and Olmec art expressed its power. Humans sought the means of gaining access to spiritual power through discipline, fasting, meditation, and self-mutilation in the form of bloodletting. They sought access, for instance, to animal spirits, such as the power of the jaguar, in order to transcend human consciousness, often by means of hallucinogenic drugs, such as ritual snuff powders. Shamans were sometimes portrayed in the sculpture in the process of taking on the jaguar spirit. This transformation process explains the widespread use of masks, often carved from jade, which combined jaguar and human features, and conveyed a state of spiritual ecstasy. Contorted facial expressions portrayed the strain of passing from one reality into another. The jaguar held especial significance as the creature which lived in the jungle, swam, and hunted both by day and by night, thereby encompassing land, water, and air, and light and darkness at the same time. The American eagle was the jaguar of the sky. The pyramid of La Venta, a symbol of Pajapan, reached into the sky, and thereby gained access to the heavens. The earth and sky were linked by

special deities, which combined aspects of both. Olmec sculpture portrayed a flying jaguar, with a human passenger, or winged jaguars bearing the earth on their backs. In the jungle trees was the poisonous snake, the fer-de-lance, which had a crested brow: because it struck from above rather than from below, it combined the properties of the earth and the sky, and became symbolised as the serpent of the skies, the forerunner of the Plumed Serpent of Teotihuacan, with the attributes of rain and wind.

Virtually all Mesoamerican cultures attached great religious significance to a ritual ball game with specially laid-out courts at the monumental sites. From at least Olmec times, human sacrifice, which accompanied the ball game ritual, was possibly associated with the rain god and a component of rain-making, whether in the form of supernatural beings devouring humans or as shamans impersonating sacred beings through ritual trance. Rain-making was also associated with the carrying of feather bundles or live vipers, symbolising the serpent of the skies.

Since 1985 discoveries concerning the Olmecs have multiplied. Even so, basic questions posed by anthropologists remain largely unanswered: when did Gulf cultures adopt subsistence agriculture? How did population growth influence social diversification? What was the relation of smaller to larger centres? What influenced chronology and location? How did control of resources affect status? What was the nature of religion and how did style reflect this? What relations did the Olmecs have with other Mesoamerican peoples? Were they unique? Why did their civilization collapse? The Olmecs provided a significant legacy for subsequent Mesoamerican cultures: the belief that meditation, austerities, and sacrifice could enable the attainment of a superior spiritual state; that contact could be made with the reality beyond the human and physical world; that

ceremonial sites reflected supernatural sanction for earthly cultures; that humanity not only existed in conjunction with cosmic powers and deities, but also shared identities with them; and their development of a religious complexity founded on rain and agricultural fertility. The Maya Chac, Zapotec Cocijo, and Toltec Tlaloc seem all to have been derived from an Olmec rain god.

The economic basis for Olmec civilisation lay in the extreme fertility of the Gulf basin rivers zone, which yielded two annual maize crops and provided not only animal life but fish as well. Available food supply from this land base sustained a large population. Much of the subsequent reputation of the Olmecs among Mesoamerican peoples may have derived from their agricultural success. The broad influence of the Olmec culture suggests the possibility of a shared cosmology, symbolism, artistic style, and rituals across Mesoamerica, allowing for differences of region and language, throughout the period 900–500 BC.

Monte Albán and the Zapotec Cultures of Oaxaca

The Monte Albán culture dominated Oaxaca for a thousand years from its first phase (or Monte Albán Ia) in 500–400 BC. The immediate antecedent was the Rosario phase (700–500 BC) in the Huitzo district, from which Monte Albán I pottery, art, architecture, and masonry emerged.

Growth of population and the strain on resources may have required a more concentrated labour force with greater social direction, in order to guarantee the food supply. In such a way, an economic and political reordering beyond the level of the peasant household addressed a basic need at a specific historical period. The concentration of landownership in the valley would have explained an increasing social differentiation and the emergence of a ruling elite with an agrarian base. By 400–200 BC, Monte Albán had passed through its key period in state development, and between 200 BC and AD 100 (Monte Albán II) clear evidence of statehood had emerged. This, then, had proved to be a slow process, covering some 300 years, after which it reached its maximum development between AD 100 and 600. Already in Monte Albán II, writing in double-columned hieroglyphics testified to the existence of a Zapotec state before the foundation of Teotihuacán in central Mexico or the Classic Maya city of Tikal in the rain-forest of present-day Guatemala. With an urban centre existing for several hundred years before its ‘Classic’ Period (Monte Albán IIIa and IIIb), the Zapotec state reached the height of its power in terms of construction, religious expression, social stratification, and rulership during

those centuries. The total population possibly reached between 15,000 and 30,000 inhabitants, supported by the valley agricultural system and receipt of tribute.

The site of Monte Albán, a fortified position at the top of a 400-m mountain overlooking the three sectors of the Valley of Oaxaca, consisted of a concentration of temples with stairways situated around a rectangular square, where public ritual took place. At Monte Albán, a graded hierarchy of residences corresponded to their occupants' status. The professional ruling caste and upper tier of the city, some 2–4 per cent of its inhabitants, lived in stone or adobe palaces. They married within their caste or with nobilities from other regions. Zapotec rulers usually passed through a year of religious instruction before taking office. Dead rulers became intermediaries between the living and supernatural forces at work in the universe. The Monte Albán tombs were for rulers and members of the nobility, and contained extraordinary funeral urns crafted in the form of living human faces, though sometimes wearing ritual masks. Ancestor worship, it appears, formed a major part of Zapotec religious expression.

The ball game also assumed great significance in Zapotec culture. Some forty ball courts have been located in the Valley of Oaxaca, dating chiefly from the Monte Albán II period. Many remain to be excavated and dated. They continued to be built thereafter, as the Monte Albán IV ball court at Dainzú in the Tlacolula Valley, dating from 900 to 1000, shows. Players wore protective masks, knee-guards, and gloves. The balls were made of latex. The significance of the ball-game in Zapotec culture remains unclear. It seems to have been an officially approved rite for the purpose of determining, implicitly with divine sanction, the outcome of disputes between communities over such issues as land and water usage.



Plate 2.2 Zapotec pyramid (labelled L by Alfonso Caso) at Monte Albán, Valley of Oaxaca. The site contains several pyramids constructed around the central plaza under the auspices of local rulers, and a northern platform ‘acropolis’. Their characteristic form probably dates from the prime period, Monte Albán IIIa and IIIb (AD 350–700). Population at the site itself possibly reached a peak of 24,000 in Period IIIb; the Valley of Oaxaca population exceeded 100,000 distributed through 1,075 known communities, of which the largest number were in the Tlacolula sub-valley. Tombs at the Monte Albán site, of which the most remarkable is tomb 104, contain wall-paintings, and funeral urns, shaped with distinctive human characteristics, placed in niches

(Author's photo)

The traditional view used to be that the Olmecs stimulated Monte Albán I and that Teotihuacan influenced Monte Albán III. Since the time of Bernal's first workings at Monte Albán during the early 1940s, the view has changed to one which, from the 1970s and 1980s, has emphasised the autochthonous nature of the development of Zapotec civilization. Monte Albán differed from Teotihuacan in that it was not a commercial centre,

because in Oaxaca the craftsmen who sustained the urban complex and inter-market trades lived in the villages of the valley floor. The city itself expanded well beyond its earlier walls during the Classic period. The maximum territorial extent of Monte Albán's power was in Period II between 100 BC and AD 100. At this time there were four outlying zones, which acted as nuclei for defence and expansion, as well as cultural influence: on the Ejutla River and in the Valley of Miahuatlán, both directly on the route southwards to the Pacific Ocean, in Nejapa on the way to the lagoons of Tehuantepec, and in the Cañada of Cuicatlán, a tropical valley at 500–700 m above sea level, which produced cotton and fruits usually by means of irrigation. This latter zone had a vital strategic significance for Monte Albán, as it controlled access from the Valley of Tehuacán into Oaxaca, that is from the routes leading directly from the Valley of Mexico. For that reason, the Zapotecs constructed a powerful fortress at Quiotepec overlooking the edge of the Cañada and the Tehuacán Valley (Puebla). In effect, Quiotepec marked the northernmost expansion of the Monte Albán state. It appears that the rulers of the Zapotec state were attempting to control the passage across Oaxaca from the principal access routes from the Valley of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

After 500 AD, however, the growth of provincial centres led to the slackening of Monte Albán's authority and increasing autonomy. Nevertheless, Joyce Marcus and Kent Flannery describe the period 350–700, which corresponds to Monte Albán IIIa and IIIb as ‘the Golden Age of Zapotec civilisation’.

The Mayas

Apart from a few works by Franciscan friars, knowledge of Maya civilization largely disappeared after the Spanish Conquest. However, the publication of descriptions of the ruined cities by John Lloyd Stephens in 1839–42, which were illustrated by the engravings of Frederick Catherwood, awakened a new interest. Together, they travelled through the rainforests of Chiapas and the Guatemalan Petén and across the Yucatán savannah. Their findings stimulated awareness of Maya culture in a period already fascinated by the rediscovery of Ancient Egypt, where written records dated back to 3000 BC. Jean-François Champollion's decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphs in 1822 by means of the parallel scripts on the Rosetta Stone, pointed to the importance of a similar interpretation of the Maya writing. Stephens and Catherwood had drawn attention to the upright stone slabs or stelae, found at the centre of the sites or at the stairways, on which were carved glyphs. However, at the time no one knew whether the sites were ceremonial centres or urban conglomerations, or whether the glyphs represented religious ideas. The first attempt at glyph transcription began during the years 1864 to 1882, although evidently the key to understanding Mayan writing had been lost.

Although the Minoan script known as Linear B was deciphered during the 1950s, Maya glyphs remained the subject of considerable dispute in the following decade, when it was argued that they recorded the history of Mayan cities. This realization made it possible to reconstruct the dynastic history of the rulers of Tikal from 292 until 869. The breakthrough in the

decipherment of written language came after 1973, when it was realised that the glyphs represented a spoken language with a fixed word order, which made possible the identification of verbs and nouns, syntax and sound. In this way, Maya inscriptions, which had mystified scholars for so long, became texts revealing the history of the ruling groups in particular states. A lost history was recovered from the stone, clay, jade, bone, or shell on which it had been recorded. The rediscovery of the language further emphasized the cultural coherence of the Maya world over a period of a thousand years.

During the Pre-Classic period (1500 BC to AD 200), the Maya peoples developed agriculture and built villages. The swamp beds and river banks of the lowland forests provided fertile material for high-yield products, such as maize, cacao, and cotton. The Hondo, Usumacinta, and Grijalva Rivers provided access to the sea by canoe. Farming settlements existed at Tikal, which would become the great Classical-era site in the Petén, by AD 600, its principal temples constructed between AD 300 and 800. A greater social stratification took place during the Middle Pre-Classic period of 900–300 BC, when Olmec influences were at their height. In due course, the traditional extended family, village, shaman, and patriarch supported the emergence of kingship, an institution which had earlier cultural precedents in Mesoamerica. The sharper division of wealth sustained a kingly office and a nobiliar caste, related to the king in varying degrees of intimacy. The king, who in religious terms symbolized the Tree of Life, contained the power required for communion with the other reality of the gods and supra-human entities.



Map 2.1 Location of Maya sites and trade routes

(Based on the maps in *Past Worlds: The Times Atlas of Archaeology*, 1991, by permission of Times Books)

The Classic Maya period covered the years 250 to 900, subdivided into three categories: Early, 250–600; Late, 600–800; Terminal, 800–900. As no manuscripts survived from that era, the stelae became the principal historical sources. The deciphered date of the earliest stelae was AD 199. From at least early Classical times, a thriving network of long-distance trade connected the Maya lowlands with the Guatemalan highlands and south-eastern Mexico. Central Mexican cults and architectural styles appeared in Maya cities, such as the cult of Tlaloc, for instance, in Tikal. The Maya and central Mexican calendars had remarkable similarities.

Yaxchilán (on the Chiapas bank of the Usumacinta River) and Uxmal (below Yucatán's Puuc hills) both flourished in the eighth and ninth centuries. Yaxchilán flourished through the period 320 to 790, according to the stone-carved hieroglyphic texts recording the history of its lords, but declined over the years 790–810. Uxmal reached its peak period between 850 and 925, only to be abandoned shortly thereafter. This centre contained large buildings with expertly crafted decorations. The Puuc sites represented an extension of the Late Classic styles of the period 700–900. The recorded dynastic history of Palenque, located in the Chiapas rainforest, began in 431. The city reached its maximum influence under Pacal the Great (615–683), Chan-Bahlum II (684–702), and Kan-Xul who reigned sometime between 702 and 721, but the power of the Palenque kings finally petered out by the end of the eighth century. Written history and pyramid and temple construction asserted dynastic legitimacy in the

deep reaches of Maya history and cosmology. The tablets on which Chan-Bahlum wrote his detailed discussion of kingship came to light again in 1841, when Stephens and Catherwood published their *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatán*, although they were unable to decipher the glyphs they encountered. Pacal's tomb was not discovered inside the Temple of Inscriptions until 1949.



Plate 2.3 Maya pyramid at Uxmal. Uxmal, founded in the eighth century in the Puuc hills of Yucatán, south of Mérida, consists of six principal groups of buildings, of which the great pyramid is the highest construction. Names have been given to several buildings – the Governor's Palace, the House of Turtles, and so on. The Uxmal style is distinct from that of Chichén Itzá and lacks its central Mexican features. The site reached its peak period between AD 850 and 925

(Author's photo)

As in the case of the Olmecs, the rituals of the Maya were designed to harness the sacred energies. Blood-letting stood at the centre of these

religious rites. Along with limited human sacrifice, it accompanied the dying and burial of kings. In this way, the shaman-king, whether by small drops of blood or by greater flows from the tongue or penis, gained a vision into the other reality of the sacred energies beyond the material and human universe, and sought communion with the divinities and ancestors. Razor-sharp blades of obsidian cut clean wounds for these ritual purposes.

Exaltation of dynastic kingship, combined with ritual propitiation of the gods, did not save the Maya from the collapse of urban life and high civilization after the eighth century. From Palenque to Copán, as kingship collapsed, the great monuments were abandoned in favour of a reversion to peasant life on forest strips. By 910, no more temple-pyramids appear to have been constructed in the southern lowlands. The failure of the city-states ruled by dynasties of kings led to the general abandonment of literacy by the political elite as the principal means of understanding the cosmos. Maya civilization, however, did not come to an end, but rekindled in the north on the plains of Yucatán from the ninth century onwards.

Teotihuacan

The predominant historical influence in central Mexico was Teotihuacan, an urban and religious centre which at its height contained a population of over 100,000 inhabitants, sustained by the Valley of Mexico's agricultural system. Teotihuacan, which flourished for eight centuries from c. 150 BC to AD 650 and 750, greatly influenced the subsequent Nahua civilizations of the Toltecs and Aztecs. The site, about 50 km to the east of Mexico City, covered some 2,000 hectares. Only a small area has so far been excavated. Some twenty pyramids are now believed to have existed. Teotihuacan was a functioning city and not, as previously supposed, exclusively a ceremonial site. The so-called Pyramids of the Sun and Moon and the Temple of Quetzalcóatl were linked by a long causeway running north to south. By c. 500, Teotihuacan had become the metropolitan and religious centre of Mesoamerica, the model for the more modest Toltec capital, Tollán (Tula, 65 km north of Mexico City), and subsequently the Aztec Tenochtitlán. Unlike Monte Albán, Teotihuacan was constructed on a grid plan. Most of the city's inhabitants lived in some 2,000 compounds divided into a multiplicity of apartments. Workshops demonstrate the commercial nature of the settlement, alongside its religious purpose.

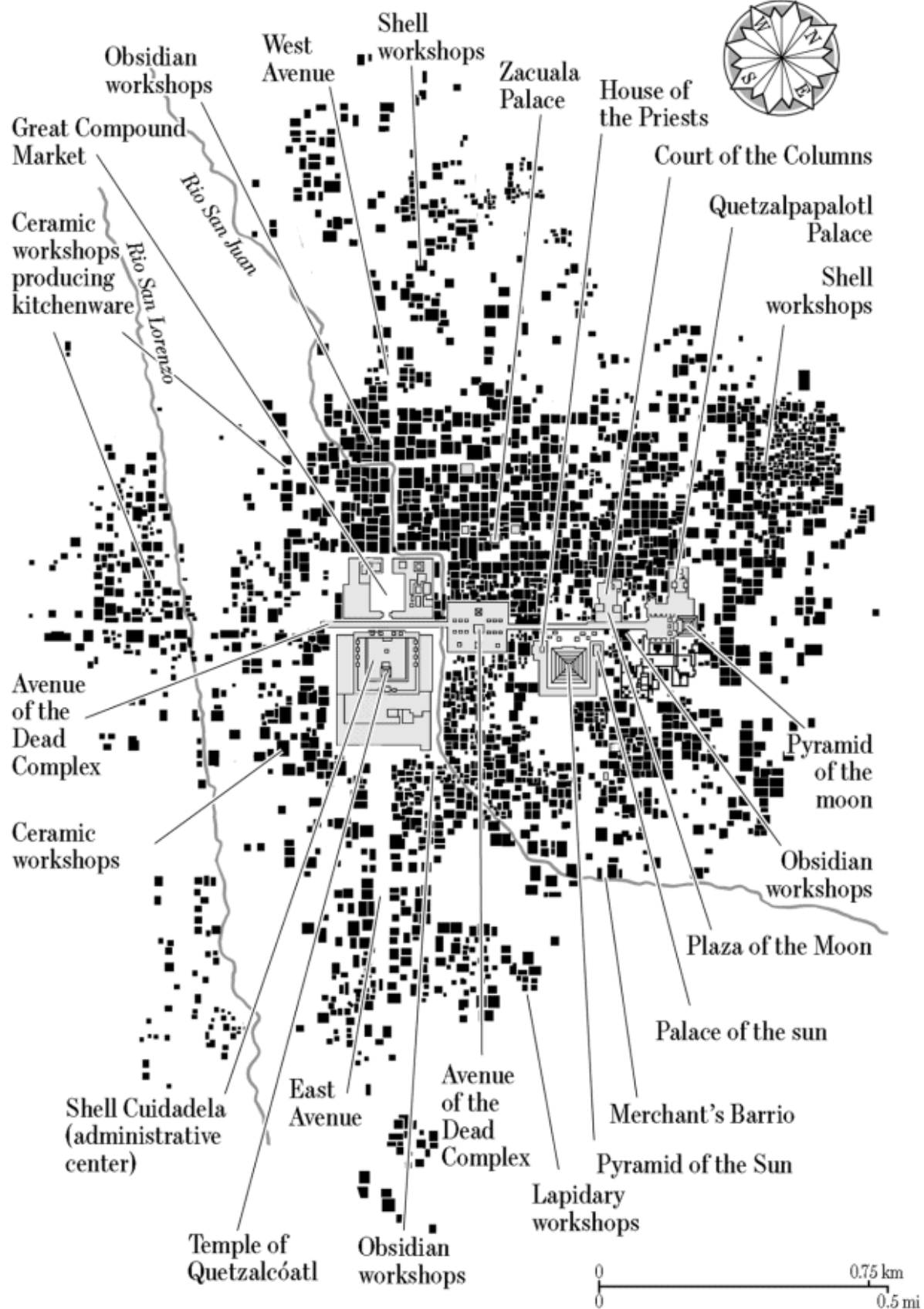
The name, Teotihuacan, was an Aztec attribution meaning Place of the Gods. We do not, in fact, know the original name of the city, its chronological history or the names of its rulers, or even the language spoken there. Nahuatl seems only to have been spoken in the city after 500. No written texts or glyphs associated with them, as there were in the case of

the Mayas or Zapotecs, have so far appeared. In fact, the only writing encountered to date has been in the so-called Oaxaca barrio for resident Zapotec diplomats or merchants. As a result, we have little knowledge of the type of government which functioned in Teotihuacan. There does not seem to have been an official dynastic cult as there was among the Mayas, which has suggested to some archaeologists that the city might have been ruled by an oligarchy.

Teotihuacan was the first major state in central Mexico. From the first century AD, population (up to 90,000) concentrated in the city rather than the surrounding countryside. For most of the Teotihuacan era, no other great population concentration existed in the Valley of Mexico. The city exercised tight control over the Mexican Basin and probably held sway over contiguous territories outside the Valley. It had direct contact with the Gulf lowlands, but probably did not exercise either political control or a commercial monopoly over them. So far, we lack sufficient evidence to explain the population concentration in the city, though the reason may be the impetus of a great religious myth. At Teotihuacan, a major religious theme was water and the life associated with it. When excavated in 1917–20, the Citadel revealed a pyramid of the feathered serpent, which Manuel Gamio, then Director of Anthropology, identified as Quetzalcóatl, and the Rain God, Tlaloc, alternating in six tiers at either side of the pyramid steps. The cult of the plumed or feathered serpent effectively originated in Teotihuacan, where the symbols of the god proliferated in stone and in murals.

The cult of Quetzalcóatl, the most pervading cult in Mesoamerica, may have arisen from the notion of a deity associated with the cultivation of maize, the staple crop. When the seed was planted in the darkness of earth,

the struggle between the lords of darkness and the celestial twins began. The growth of the plant forced the lords of darkness to recognize the annual cycle and return it to the light of day. In this sense, earth became a fertile womb, and creation triumphed over death. The maize god, portrayed in the Maya city of Copán (Honduras) as a beautiful youth, provided food for the human race. A clear interrelationship existed between cosmology and the mythical world, on the one hand, and the natural world and human experience in society, on the other hand. Out of this confluence Quetzalcóatl emerged.



Map 2.2 Plan of the city of Teotihuacán. The sixth largest city in the world in 500 AD, Teotihuacan covered a considerably larger area than Monte Albán and dominated Mesoamerica. Built on a grid-iron pattern, the city covered 20 km²

(Based on the maps in *Past Worlds: The Times Atlas of Archaeology*, 1991, by permission of Times Books.)

The Plumed Serpent represented the union of heavenly and earthly powers, the symbol of fertility and regeneration, the duality of spirit and matter. In mythological terms, Quetzalcóatl had been miraculously conceived during the Age of the Fourth Sun (the fourth cosmic age) by Chimalman without sexual contact with any male. According to one version, she had swallowed a precious stone and thereby conceived a son.



Plate 2.4 Detail of the ‘Temple of the Plumed Serpent’ at Teotihuacan. The mysteries surrounding this long-lasting Valley of Mexico culture attracted the attention of Manuel Gamio (1883–1960), the principal Mexican archaeologist of the early twentieth century. His 5-volume study appeared in 1922. Gamio had been a pupil of Zelia Nuttall in Mexico and Frank Boas in New York. He and Caso (1896–1971) firmly believed that the origins of modern Mexico lay in the Pre-Columbian Cultures. A later interpretation of Teotihuacan's religious symbolism by Caso and Ignacio Bernal (1910–92) came out in 1952

(Photo by M. A. Anipkin)

After considerable material prosperity and peace, when the city was at the height of its influence, an internal crisis seems to have brought its downfall. The explanation still remains unclear. The system of government and political leadership may have broken down and the state-supported ritual been under attack. At some stage, the principal temples, formerly topped with elaborate decoration, and many houses in the central area were destroyed by fire. In the early eighth century, Teotihuacan ceased to be a

major urban unit. Its abandonment left decaying, wind-swept ruins for the following 1,200 years. One modern visitor to the site, then in a process of reclamation, was D. H. Lawrence, who had arrived in Mexico for the first time in March 1923. Lawrence considered Teotihuacan to be a more impressive site than the ruins of Ancient Rome or Pompeii, and wrote in his novel, *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), that Quetzalcóatl was more alive than the Hispanic churches in Mexico. Gamio, who had brought to life this vanished universe, became the model for Don Ramón in the novel, the revolutionary leader who wants to replace Christianity with a rebirth of the ancient religion and thereby bring Quetzalcóatl back into ordinary people's lives.

The North

Sedentary life began in Durango around 500 BC, in response to population growth. By around AD 500, the Chachihuites culture had developed around the site of Alta Vista in the centre-south of the present-day state. By AD 200–300, the north-central zone of the present-day Republic, from the Bajío as far as Durango, Zacatecas, and San Luis Potosí, was already inhabited by sedentary groups linked to the cultures further south. From the sixth to the ninth centuries, the Chalchihuites culture flourished in the Valleys of San Antonio and Colorado in western Zacatecas. Irrigation and an extended commerce accounted for the long duration of these sites. Hundreds of Precolumbian mining sites have been discovered across this region dating from AD 500 to 900. These discoveries suggest that mining was not a colonial innovation but a significant element in economic life. A broad commercial network developed, which linked the cultures in Durango and Zacatecas, at mid-point to areas as far north as New Mexico and ‘southward’ to the Valley of Mexico, and accounted for their importance as trade emporia. Teotihuacan exercised an enormous influence on them. Turquoise, serpentine, and copper, in demand in the great city, came from New Mexico by way of this route. Local mines provided further commodities. In such a way the pre-Columbian Turquoise and Copper Roads through the north anticipated the future Silver Road of the Spanish colonial era.

The Chalchihuites culture reached its climax at La Quemada in southern Zacatecas from AD 500 to 800, when construction of the civil and

religious buildings took place on a commanding hill top at the edge of a series of hills. The Hall of Columns, the Pyramid and the Ball-Game Court all dated from this period of maximum influence. Adams and Macleod point to the development of copper metallurgy in western and north-western Mexico around AD 800, which suggests that technological advances continued. By 1200–1300, these regions were producing alloys with tin and silver.

The collapse of Teotihuacan in the mid-eighth century may have cut this zone off from the centre and left it exposed to the nomadic tribes generically known as the Chichimecas. The rise of the Toltec culture at Tollán (Tula) during the tenth century pointed to a partial reoccupation of these areas, until its collapse in the twelfth century. After the twelfth century, Chichimecas of different sorts dominated the territory north of the Río Lerma, which not even the Aztecs managed to penetrate.

The Time of Troubles, 750–950

During the eighth century, the main political units which had taken centuries to construct declined, collapsed, or were overthrown. Monte Albán declined during the period of instability from AD 600 to 900 throughout Mesoamerica. Although its public buildings fell into ruin, the city itself was never abandoned. The explanation for this decline may lie in the competition for resources between the city and the villages of the valley floor. Rapid population growth in the valley would have led to land disputes and possibly to conflict with the city's requirements. Food shortages in the frequent dry years, when the expected rainfall failed, would have pressed heavily on the administrative institutions of the city. Furthermore, the decline of Teotihuacan around AD 700–750 removed a rival centre of power, against which the Zapotecs had sought to preserve their independence and identity. Population no longer required such concentration in the Valley of Oaxaca. Authority became dispersed through a number of smaller centres in the subsequent period.



Plate 2.5 La Quemada in profile, from the approach road

(Author's photo)

In central Mexico, itinerant armed bands roved the countryside. A number of lesser, more peripheral states rose in significance, such as El Tajín (Veracruz), Cacaxtla (Tlaxcala), and Xochicalco in the present-day state of Morelos. Xochicalco flourished between 600 and 900 as a wartime state situated in a strong, defensible position, although it would ultimately be brought down by violence. The prominence of the cult of the Plumed Serpent was evident there at its principal pyramid, and there was also a ball court.

The explanations for the collapse of the great Classic Maya centres of the southern lowlands during the ninth century continue to be disputed. A combination of factors probably accounted for the abandonment of the urban centres. Military rivalries and internal conflicts between kings and nobles may provide the main cause. During the same period, repeated fighting between rival city-states worsened the impact of population growth on delicate and complex agricultural systems. Outside pressures and

internal conflict would have undermined the effectiveness of central government, necessary for the coordination of effort in the struggle with the forest environment. The collapse of Teotihuacan may also have affected conditions in the Maya lands by loosening control over border territories between the principal cultural zones. Semi-civilised groups such as the Maya-speaking Chontal in the southern Gulf zone of present-day Tabasco established control of the trade routes in this period.

The Toltecs

Tula was located in an environment harsher than that of Teotihuacan and neither very prosperous nor extensive in its area of control. Migration from northern areas of Mexico probably accounted for the increase of population in this area even before the decline of Teotihuacan and the arrival of Nahuatl speakers. During the Toltec period (800–1170), trade with the north-west continued at least in the first centuries. The Quetzalcóatl myth became elaborated in political terms and formed part of the power struggle within the city of Tollán. In the history of Tollán, Quetzalcóatl became confused with the human figure, Ce Acatl Topiltzin, either the founder of the city or its last ruler (or both), to whom the name Quetzalcóatl was given. In the former version, Ce Acatl, said to have been born in Tepoztlán (Morelos) around 940, arrived in Tollán in 968, but was expelled in 987. The father of the human Quetzalcóatl was a semi-god, the Cloud-Serpent, Mixcóatl, who had first established Toltec power. The twinning of man and god became a characteristic feature of Toltec and Aztec religion and politics. Tollán adopted the myths of Teotihuacan as part of its own legitimization, and the Quetzalcóatl cult reached its peak. The internal political struggle, which might have involved the challenge by the secular warrior caste to proponents of priestly rule, resulted in the overthrow of the cult of Quetzalcóatl, interpreted metaphorically as the flight of the god into exile.

The victory went to the warrior caste, symbolised in the triumph of the Lord of Life and Death, Tezcatlipoca, its patron. The predominance of Tezcatlipoca led to the prevalence of human sacrifice in Mesoamerican

religion, which rose to a climax during the Aztec period. According to the myth, Tezcatlipoca was the source of Quetzalcóatl's destruction: he had brought him the goddess of prostitution, Xochiquetzal, with whom he had intercourse, thereby subjecting himself to the punishment of death by fire. The god's heart, however, rose through the flames and ascended into the heavens to become the morning star or the planet Venus. Quetzalcóatl, however, remained a creator, and before his rising into the heavens, he had first to descend into hell. This he did in the company of his double or twin, the dog, Xólotl, in order to obtain from the Lord of the Underworld the bones of those who had died during the fourth cosmic age. With these, he would create the new race of mankind for the Age of the Fifth Sun, which in historical terms corresponded to the age of the Nahua peoples. Quetzalcóatl, then, was the Mesoamerican deity most associated with humanity and, from the Nahua perspective, with human history. Enrique Florescano argues that the various divine forms associated with the god merged in the century 900–1000, as one personality. During the Toltec period, the maize god became transformed into Quetzalcóatl.

The Chichimecas destroyed Tollán, dangerously exposed to the nomad frontier, around 1170. The myths of Quetzalcóatl and Tezcatlipoca were the means through which this historical event was subsequently interpreted. The struggle between the gods symbolised the conflict between Topiltzin and his enemy, Huemac, both of whom were identified with the gods themselves. The struggle also took place in the other great cities of the epoch, Culhuacan and Cholula. The expulsion of Quetzalcóatl from Tollán led, according to historical tradition, to the merging of Toltec and Maya influences in the civilisation of Chichén Itzá, where the cult flourished anew. Cholula had been specifically founded by Quetzalcóatl, and the

greatest of its temples was dedicated to him in his attribute as Ehécatl, the Lord of the Winds.

The Post-Classic Maya

The lowland Maya phase (c. 750–1100), which focused on Chichén Itzá, followed the collapse of the Classic cultures of Uxmal, Palenque, Bonampak, Tikal, and Copán, and led to a period of north Yucatecan predominance in Mesoamerica for the first time. The precise nature of the relationship with central Mexico remains unclear. According to recent dating, Chichén Itzá rose from 750/800 and became the dominant power in northern Yucatán from 1000 until 1050. The decline took place around 1050–1100. The cult of Quetzalcóatl, known in Chichén Itzá as Kukulcan, was celebrated at the highest pyramid, where the setting sun at the equinox cast its shadow across the body of a serpent aligned with the northern steps and joined the sculpted heads at their base. At Chichén Itzá, the Mayas developed a high degree of astronomy, as the circular Observatory demonstrates, with a complex understanding of the cosmos and the position of creatures and humans within it.

The topographical context of savannah Yucatán radically differed from the forest cultures of earlier periods, and made for greater religious and commercial contact with outside cultures. No cultural frontier existed between the forest Maya and the new states which arose in the savannah zones. In Yucatán, water came from underground wells, known as *cenotes*, into which sacrificial virgins would be thrown at times of difficulty in order to propitiate the gods. Differing historical circumstances complemented geographical conditions. The tenth-century cultures of the Yucatán savannah were the product of the time of troubles. The political failures of

the earlier cultures encouraged renewed attempts to define the basis of social organization and rulership. The predominance of Chichén Itzá, which was clearly not simply a city-state like those of the Classic period but the core of an imperial system, rested on a structure of alliances, which anticipated the Aztec style of expansion during the fifteenth century. The city initially arose from the era of troubles, although its chronology is still imprecise, because the rulers, in contrast to their predecessors in the forest sites, did not use stelae and hieroglyphs to record their history. Partly for this reason we do not know how long it took the rulers of Chichén Itzá to establish their supremacy over northern Yucatán, let alone elsewhere.



Plate 2.6 Maya pyramid at Chichén Itzá (northern Yucatán). The Spaniards called this pyramid ‘El Castillo,’ but it had been the Temple of Kukulcan (Quetzalcóatl), located in the ceremonial precinct. It was a Late Classic site in styles and religious practice, though the site was originally founded by the Itzá in the early sixth century. Many Maya temples were aligned with heavenly bodies and some with the cave systems beneath them, understood as entrances to the Underworld. Toltec influences may be evident in the imposing ‘Temple of the Warriors.’ A skull platform (*tzompantil*) stood next to the Ball-Court. There seems to have been no Toltec migration, as previously supposed

(Author's photo)

Vase-paintings and frescoes portrayed battle scenes, court life, and rituals in several of the Maya cities. Successful warfare, flourishing commerce, and a sophisticated nobility characterised the new imperial city. The nobles seem to have shared greater authority with their kings than in the forest Maya states. The origin and identity of these ruling groups, however, remain largely unexplained.

A type of confederacy, dominated by the Cocom family, appears to have ruled the last of the great Maya states of the Post-Classic period, Mayapan, in the period 1250–1450. This city copied the architectural structures of Chichén Itzá, but was walled for defence like Tulum, the eastern coastal city. Although a series of small states, soon to face an Aztec threat from the west, characterised the peninsula during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Maya culture still remained a unity.

The Zapotecs and Mixtecs of the Post-Classic Era

Lesser centres emerged in Oaxaca after the decline of Monte Albán, such as Lambityeco, situated 2 km west of present-day Tlacolula in the eastern sector of the valley, during the phase known as Monte Albán IV (700–1000). Other sites, such as Zaachila, Mitla, and Cuilapan, arose in the period between 600 and 900. The earliest settlement at Mitla, situated at the edge of a river, had been around 1200 BC, and expanded rapidly until the Monte Albán II period around the first century AD. Mitla, a nucleated urban centre with important religious and civic buildings and a suburban residential area, was supported by a surrounding agricultural hinterland. Like Yagul, Mitla rose to prominence in the Monte Albán V era (1000–1500). Most of these smaller towns grew from earlier sites, which even antedated Monte Albán and were already ceremonial sites during the Monte Albán II and IIa periods. They flourished, however, as the great mountain urban centre declined. Temples were constructed on pyramid mounds, and a ruling caste, concerned to establish marriage networks, took up residence in stone buildings.

At the same time, other centres emerged across the mountainous west of Oaxaca, in the Mixteca Alta. There were generally smaller chieftainships known as *cacicazgos*. Like the valley sites, they had long antecedents. They were small states ruled by a local nobility with inherited land titles, which often directly controlled agricultural labor. The Mixteca was a region of high-altitude valleys with a cooler climate than the Valley of Oaxaca.

Although there had been nothing in the Mixteca comparable in size or cultural development to San José Mogote, still less Monte Albán, Yucuita in the Valley of Nochixtlán became the principal urban centre surrounded by many lesser settlements. Contemporaneous with Monte Albán in the Classic period, Yucuñudahui, in the same valley, also represented a large, stratified centre with public buildings for religious and civic functions, dependent on an integrated rural hinterland. The Mixteca lay across the route between the Valleys of Mexico and Oaxaca, and for that reason Mixtec culture felt the influence of both the Toltecs and the Zapotecs, while retaining its own characteristic features and languages. The Mixtec chieftainships were sustained by effective mobilization of agricultural manpower in terraced maize farming as well as in warfare.

During the period of dislocation, urban centres arose in the Mixteca Baja, a series of semi-tropical valleys at 1000–2000 m above sea level on the Puebla–Oaxaca border, between 600 and 900. Mixtec centres re-emerged after the fall of Tula with a more developed style from the 1160s. Mixtec kings, furthermore, reinforced their legitimacy by reference to Toltec descent. In this, they anticipated later Aztec practice in the Valley of Mexico. The first Mixtec rulership established, possibly modelled on Tula, was the state of Tilantongo in the Mixteca Alta from 1030. A warlike mountain people, the Mixtecs expanded towards the Pacific Coast. The ruler of Tilantongo took advantage of the existence of a Mixtec colony in that area to establish a further state at Tututepec, subordinating the Chatinos and the southern Zapotecs living between Miahuatlán and the coast. This became the focus of Mixtec dominance of the western coastal zone of Oaxaca, known as the Mixteca de la Costa, until the Spanish conquest in 1522 destroyed it with a mixture of trickery and brutality. On the death of

the last Mixtec ruler of Tututepec, Hernán Cortés bestowed the lordship on his second-in-command, the notorious and violent Pedro de Alvarado.

The wealthy Kingdom of Yanhuítlán arose in the Post-Classic era on the basis of subject peasant communities in the Nochíxtlán Valley. On the eve of the Spanish conquest, it was the largest of the Nochíxtlán chieftainships, and controlled up to twenty-five other settlements including Yucuita which had been the Classic era centre. Mixtec lords gave protection to peasant-workers who paid tribute to them, laboured, or acted as soldiers. The Mixtec *caciques* consolidated their position through marriage alliances, including with the Valley of Oaxaca Zapotecs. This process gradually introduced a Mixtec element into the Valley, including a colony in the Cuilapan district. By about 1280, Cuilapan appears to have had Mixtec-speakers among its local population, reinforced by further immigrants in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

The principal political centre in the Valley of Oaxaca in the Monte Albán V era was the Kingdom of Zaachila. Available evidence suggests that the ruling dynasty began in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, the first ruler dying in 1415. Under the fourth ruler, Cosíjoeza (1487–1529), the Zaachila Zapotecs expanded their commerce and political authority into the Isthmus, with the result that Tehuantepec became a second Zapotec capital. Pushing the Huaves on to the narrow coastal strips around the Tehuantepec lagoons, the Zapotecs gained control of the salt deposits of the Isthmus, already a valuable commodity in their regional trade. Cosíjoeza's son, Cosíjopii (b. 1502), became the ruler of Tehuantepec at the age of sixteen until his death in 1563, although subordinated to Spanish hegemony after 1521 and Christianized in 1527.

Central Mexico

Even before the fall of Tollán, large groups of population moved into the Valley of Mexico from the north, possibly as a result of climate change, and formed multi-ethnic communities there. These laid the basis for a new city-state system there: by the end of the thirteenth century some fifty small urban units, semi-autonomous and with their own religious centres, occupied defined territories in the valley. They remained intact throughout the period of Aztec (or, more correctly, Mexica) hegemony and survived the Spanish Conquest into the colonial era. Each of these states derived their legitimacy from the claim of Toltec descent.

During the century after 1250 military rivalry among the city states intensified, although the tribal state system still remained fragile. The Mexica continued to be just a minor group until around 1400, dependent on more powerful states.

Accelerated urbanization within the Valley of Mexico required a complex agricultural system to sustain its population, especially as none of the principal cities was self-sufficient. Irrigation and terraced, mountainside agriculture intensified production. Marshes at the lake edge were drained to form 'floating gardens' (*chinampas*) for extra food cultivation. No wheeled vehicles had been developed and there were no draught animals in Mesoamerica. Accordingly, the rising population of central Mexico faced enormous ecological and technological obstacles to the increase in food supply. The *chinampas* formed part (but only part) of the solution. Fertilized by lake-bed mud, they provided year-round crops. At the height

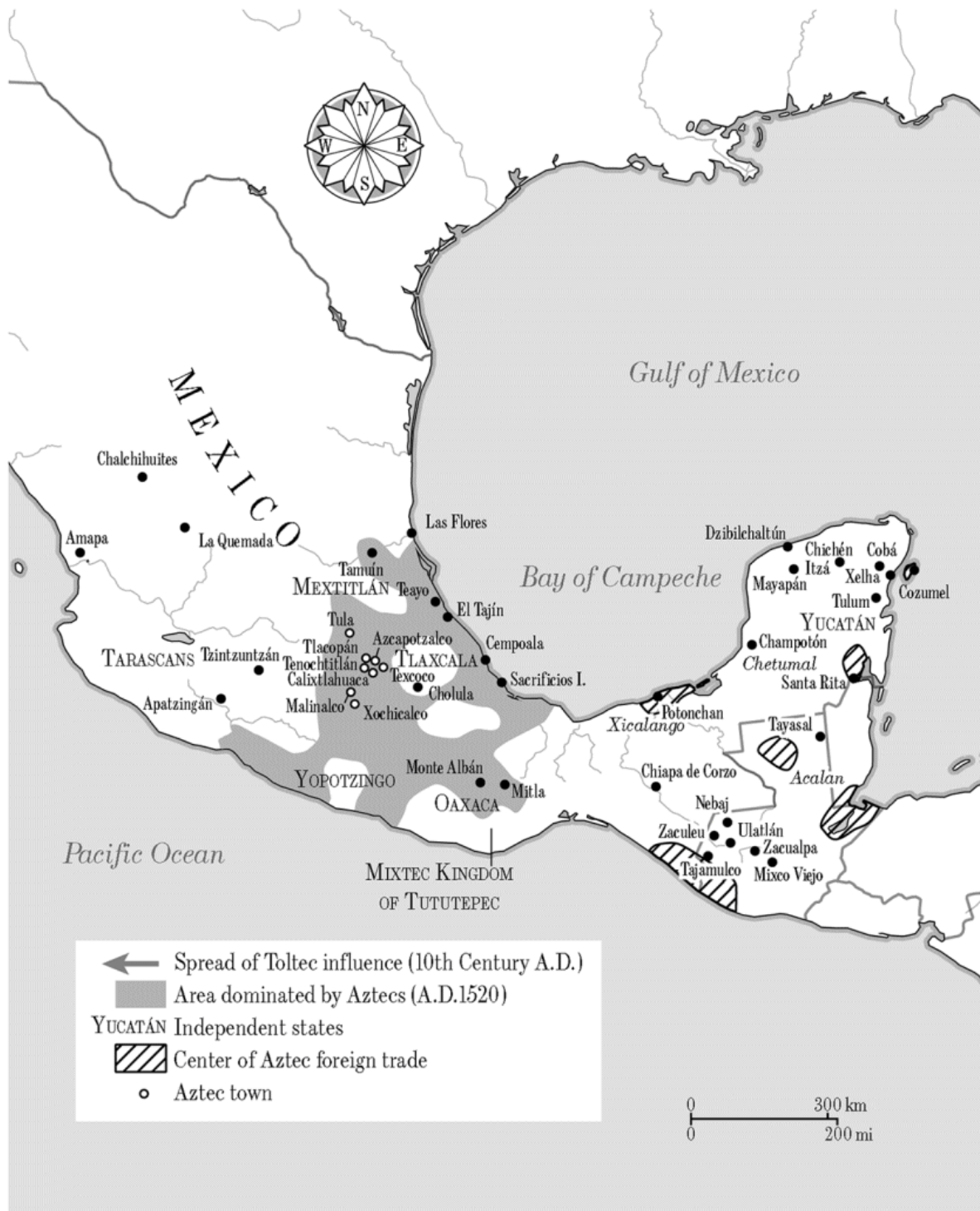
of Tenochtitlán's power around 1500, they covered an estimated 9,000 hectares, even allowing for pools and canals. Because the *chinampas* required a constant water level, dikes, aqueducts, and canals were built, particularly from the second quarter of the fifteenth century, for regulation and to separate fresh from saline waters. Tenochtitlán's location differentiated the nature of the city from any other established in Mesoamerica, especially as the absence of an immediate agricultural hinterland required subordination of surrounding cities and their rural perimeters.

By the late fifteenth century, at least a dozen such cities had populations of over 10,000, with that of the Aztec capital, Tenochtitlán, passing 150,000 inhabitants at that time. Other cities, such as Texcoco, ruled by the poet-kings, Nezahualcóyotl (1418–72) and Nezahualpilli (1472–1515), stood along the lake shore. Texcoco played a central role in helping the Spanish to bring down Tenochtitlán in 1520–1. If we could successfully piece together the fifteenth-century political history of Mesoamerica, we would understand more clearly how the Spanish conquest was possible. The shifting alliances and rivalries between indigenous states would provide the focus.

The Aztecs

Most Valley states adopted the form of rule by a *tlatoani* or principal noble figure. The Aztecs adopted this system from the 1370s, though only after 1426 did it fall under the control of one dynasty. Divine right and hereditary rule provided the political means for the imperial expansion of the period from 1428 to 1519. The Aztec rulers legitimized their position by identifying with the Toltecs, whose successors they claimed to be through intermarriage with the dynasty of Culhuacan.

According to Aztec tradition, Xólotl, this time as the evening star, guided these Nahua people from their ancestral home in Aztlán on their journey into the promised land of central Mexico. The Aztecs effectively replaced Quetzalcóatl with Huitzilopochtli, the God of War, whose specific disciples they were. In this way, they departed significantly from the tradition of Tollán, which they expropriated as their own, although they retained Tlaloc in the Teotihuacan tradition. The Aztecs imposed Huitzilopochtli among the creator gods wherever their supremacy was recognised.



Map 2.3 The Toltec–Aztec world

(From the maps in *Past Words: The Times Atlas of Archaeology*, 1991,
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An educated elite of ‘nobles’ (*pipiltin*) stood at the apex of Aztec society: they performed the function of guardians of knowledge and historical tradition. The *pipiltin* were educated in a noble school in the oral and pictorial tradition of glyph writing on agave paper, skin, or canvas. Among the Aztecs and other Mesoamerican peoples, the oral tradition remained a powerful means of transmitting knowledge. A professional group of merchants (*pochtecas*), some of them trading well beyond the frontiers of Aztec-subordinated territory, formed a highly significant part of the Tenochtitlán hegemony. Merchants of lesser but allied states, such as Texcoco, were not permitted to trade beyond the limits of the empire.

Tenochtitlán, founded in 1325, arose from an island in the western part of Lake Texcoco, the largest of a five-lake system in the Valley of Mexico. The two northern lakes were in the driest part of the valley, while the two southern lakes, Xochimilco and Chalco, lay in the most fertile agricultural zones. Three long causeways, dating from the reign of Itzcóatl (1427–40), linked the city to the mainland at Tepeyac in the north, Tlacopan (Tacuba) in the west, and Iztapalapa and Coyoacán in the south. Because evaporation exceeded precipitation, the lakes were gradually shrinking. As a result, the northern lakes became inaccessible by canoe during the dry season from October to May. Tenochtitlán, with an estimated peak population of 200,000 inhabitants, considerably larger than Seville at that time, constantly depended on effective transportation, by canoe or by foot. The system of professional portage by carriers known as *tlamemes*, a hereditary group probably from among the landless, had diminished effectiveness, due to the human limitations of weight and distance. The lakes’ location, however, gave Tenochtitlán the advantage of being able to transfer to canoe transportation at the lakesides. Important urban concentrations arose or

relocated to the edge of the lakes as part of this system of supply. Canoes proved to be forty times more effective than individual humans with respect not to their speed but to the amount that could be carried.

Aztec political practice relied on dominant influence rather than territorial control. It was a hegemonic rather than a territorial empire, and as such experienced repeated revolts from subordinated states attempting to repudiate their tribute obligations. The Aztecs had no costly, standing army, with the result that their 'empire' did not depend on political centralization but on the subordination of a series of client states under their local *tlatoani*, which maintained Aztec supremacy within their own spheres. The Aztec empire generally left in place existing political structures, allowing the army to concentrate on priority expansion. Warfare, in any case, followed the agricultural cycle, that is, it took place after the harvest in October and before the rainy season began at the end of May. The authorities in Tenochtitlán received tribute from all client states. Failure to pay tribute would become a pretext for war. In such a way, the Aztecs were able to dominate extensive spheres of territory across central and southern Mesoamerica.

Aztec campaigns within the Valley of Mexico began in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, with incursions into present-day Puebla and Morelos. During the first half of the fifteenth century, Aztec penetration reached Tula to the north, Tulancingo in the northeast, and into present-day Guerrero to the south-west. Under Itzcóatl, the Aztecs first became a military power. Moctezuma I (1440–69) made the Aztec presence felt in Puebla, on the Gulf Coast, and in northern Oaxaca. Axayácatl (1469–81) pushed it westwards and north-eastwards to Tuxpan on the Gulf Coast.

Early Aztec power rested on the Triple Alliance of Tenochtitlán, Tlatelolco, and Tlacopan, formed in 1428, a league of tribute-receiving cities which dominated the Valley of Mexico and the territory beyond. Subordinated territories were required to cover the cost of transporting tribute commodities to Tenochtitlán. If a town resisted subordination, the rate of tribute would be doubled. The two basic components of Tenochtitlán's authority were receipt of tribute and the introduction of Aztec gods into the local pantheon. Tribute, in effect, supplemented the intricate market system inherited from Mesoamerica's long past. Aztec expansion followed the trade routes, and, in turn, the *pochtecas* followed the soldiers. It represented the pursuit of economic sustenance by political and military means. Expansion through the agricultural zones led to the economic subordination of less powerful city-states within the Valley of Mexico, which were reduced from manufacturing centres for their own rural hinterlands to primary suppliers for the great metropolis. Craft skills, furthermore, were increasingly centralized in Tenochtitlán, in part because of the greater input of raw materials from the *pochtecas'* long-distance trades. Tenochtitlán became the dominant manufacturing and distribution centre.

Political considerations complemented Aztec economic expansion. Essentially, the tactic was to avoid outright war through intimidation or low-intensity conflict. Logistics inhibited full-scale mobilisation on a regular basis. Instead, the Aztecs preferred demonstrations of power, designed to induce voluntary submission. In such a way, they asserted their supremacy. In cases where this failed or when subordinated states rebelled, the Aztecs launched 'flower wars', designed to keep rivals on the defensive, as a warning. From the mid-fifteenth century, these wars appear to have

involved the taking of large numbers of warrior-captives for sacrifice to the principal gods of Tenochtitlán. The interpretation of these wars is still disputed. However, the later Aztec state developed an increasing preoccupation with human sacrifice on a large scale as a means of propitiating the gods upon whose goodwill the agricultural cycle depended. What this implied in political terms remains unclear, but it does suggest a deepening consciousness of the precarious basis of the empire on the part of its rulers and, perhaps, at the same time an appreciation that the material base of the whole structure remained subject to unpredictable meteorological fluctuations. Mesoamerican cosmology, inherited by the Aztecs, was designed to ward off disasters brought upon human beings from extra-terrestrial sources.

The weak link in the Aztec system continued to be the unpacified powers, particularly Tlaxcala, which had allied with Huejotzingo and Cholula, and the Tarascan kingdom of Michoacán to the north-west of the central valleys. The latter held out under the Cazonci kings from the late fifteenth century through the first two decades of the sixteenth. The authorities in Tenochtitlán kept garrison troops on the exposed frontiers and in areas of uncertain loyalty, such as the Valley of Oaxaca. Although some colonists did reside in subordinated areas, the Aztec kings never undermined local rulers if they remained loyal. A series of buffer states was maintained on the imperial peripheries, which paid tribute in arms and military service.

The Aztecs never fully controlled Oaxaca, in spite of many campaigns into the region and the consequent imposition of tribute. The process of subordination from the Valley of Mexico would be completed by the Spanish conquerors after 1520. The principal Aztec aim was control of the

direct route from the Valley of Mexico through the Mixteca and Valley of Oaxaca to the Isthmus and thence to Soconusco, one of the main cacao-producing zones. Moctezuma I campaigned across central Puebla, into Veracruz, and thence the Mixteca, taking the Mixtec stronghold of Coixtlahuaca in 1478. Ahuitzotl (1486–1502) pushed towards the Valley of Oaxaca and thence to the Isthmus in 1496–8. The rise of Aztec power, and its terrible implications, led to a series of extemporary alliances between Mixtec and Zapotec rulers designed to keep the Mexica out altogether or at least to mitigate their impact. At first, the alliance between Zaachila and the Mixtec chieftains kept the Aztecs out of the valley, obliging them to use the Pacific coastal route to Soconusco. Zapotec watchtowers in the Cañada of Cuicatlán surveyed the movements of both the Aztecs and the Mixtecs. Mixtec garrisons in Huitzo and near Cuilapan reinforced the position of Zaachila, while at the same time posing a potential threat to it. The alliance managed to push back the first Aztec thrust at Huitzo in 1486 but the Zapotecs, unable to keep them out definitively, reached a unilateral accord with them to allow military passage across the Valley. Near the centre of the valley, the Aztecs established a settlement at Huaxyacac, which in the Spanish colonial period would form the base for the Hispanic town of Antequera de Oaxaca.

In 1495, the Zapotec–Mixtec alliance was renewed to counter a further major threat from the Valley of Mexico. This renewed Aztec attempt to control the routes to the Isthmus resulted in their failure after a long siege to take the Zapotec fortress of Guiengola, situated 1000 m above the Tehuantepec River. Guiengola, however, was more than just a fortress: it possibly originated as a religious and administrative centre in the Post-Classic era with two pyramids and eighty other structures in imitation of

Monte Albán, and was always associated with the royal dynasty of Zaachila. Again, however, the Zapotecs reached a compromise with the Aztecs, in accordance with which Cosijoeza married Ahuitzotl's daughter in 1496, associating the two rulerships in a marriage alliance. Aztec southern expansion and imposition of tributary status continued, nevertheless, under Moctezuma II (1502–20). The Aztec presence in Oaxaca resulted in the appearance of Nahuatl settlements and place-names alongside those of the Zapotecs, Mixtecs, and other ethnic groups in the region. On the eve of the Spanish incursion, then, Oaxaca represented a complex multi-ethnicity of peoples at different stages of development.

Alliances within Meso-America made the Spanish conquest possible. It could not have been achieved without them. Rival American states sought to take advantage of the presence of the small, well-armed band of Castilian fighting men in pursuit of their own traditional objectives. In this way, the alliance system constructed by the rulers of Tenochtitlán was subverted, and ultimately disintegrated, leaving the Aztec metropolis politically and materially isolated. Smallpox, brought by the Europeans, had already struck the city for the first time in 1520, even before the establishment of colonial rule. The Spanish brought with them the three gifts of medieval Europe: the cultural traditions of their age, the Christian religion, and epidemic disease. All three would have a drastic effect on the Americans. The Europeans justified their intervention on the grounds of superior morality and civilization. They focussed on the Aztec abuse of the traditionally limited religious practice of human sacrifice as their principal justification for destroying the cosmological system developed in Mesoamerica over thousands of years. Spanish atrocities, however, were striking. Hernán Cortés's massacre in Cholula in the autumn of 1519 left an estimated 3,000

dead, and Pedro de Alvarado's massacre of worshippers in Tenochtitlán in the summer of 1520 initiated full-scale warfare between the Aztecs and the invaders. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Mesoamerica experienced two catastrophes from which it took centuries to recover (if it ever did): the hegemony of the Aztecs and the European incursion.

The Aztecs of the Present Day

The Aztec attempt to concentrate power and wealth in Tenochtitlán through a network of subordination foreshadowed the centralization of authority in its successor city by the Spanish viceroys. In many respects, the focus on Mexico City during the colonial era had more far-reaching consequences than in the less technologically advanced Aztec era. Although certain continuities ran through the Aztec and colonial periods, their political cultures remained widely different. Even so, Octavio Paz in *El laberinto de la soledad* (The Labyrinth of Solitude), (Mexico 1950) and *Posdata* (1970) argued for a continuity between the Aztec *tlatoani*, the Spanish colonial viceroy, and the modern Mexican President – in effect, the successor of Moctezuma. The pyramid structure of power characterised the authoritarianism of all three systems. The pre-Columbian cultures mythologized the human predicament and the structures of religious and political power. For Paz, modern Mexican political culture has mythologised the Presidency and the monopoly party, the PRI, in a similar manner. For that reason, he concluded that Mexican emancipation, begun with the War of Independence in 1810, has remained incomplete. In the judgement of Paz, Mexico, instead of concluding that the overthrow of Spanish colonial rule completed the process of emancipation, should finish the process altogether by emancipating itself from the Aztecs, whose power he considered to be a usurpation. This view contradicted the basic tenet of twentieth-century Mexican nationalism, that the modern republic is the successor state to the Aztec Empire.

The rejection of the Hispanic tradition led to the glorification of the Aztecs by the dominant party in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Reaffirming the centralism of previous systems (in spite of the ostensibly federal nature of the Constitution of 1917), the Mexico City-based régime increasingly portrayed the Aztecs as the culmination of the pre-Columbian experience. The Aztec Empire became in this way the forerunner and anticipation of the contemporary Mexican state. This perspective has received its maximum expression in the National Museum of Anthropology and History, the state-financed collection of antiquities operated under the auspices of the INAH, established in 1939 at the end of a period of intense radical nationalism. The National Museum incorporates exhibits from all the pre-Columbian cultures, which are organised in a chronological order that reaches its apogee with Tenochtitlán. Paz has described the building not as a museum but as a mirror. With the subsequent excavation of the Aztec Great Temple, after the demolition of colonial buildings located on the north-east corner of the central square between the National Palace (constructed on the site of Moctezuma's Palace) and the Cathedral, the world of Tenochtitlán began once more to rise up from the earth and assume a fresh life under the auspices of the PRI-dominated state of the decades before 2000.

The National Museum, so magnificent in its contemporary form and location that it could be described as a wonder of the modern world, has a history of its own. Early colonial fascination with the pre-Columbian cultures led ultimately to American assertion of the authenticity of the historical experience of the continent in opposition to European ignorance and deprecation. From the later eighteenth century, defence, if not propagation, of the idea of the pre-Columbian epoch as the 'Ancient

History' of the Americas, on a par with Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the Aegean, became associated with American patriotism. A 'neo-Aztecism' filtered through the Mexican Enlightenment into the ideology of the Independence movement. In 1813, for instance, Mexican separatists named their new country the 'Republic of Anáhuac', the Aztec name for their core territory. Independence in 1821 brought the name 'The Mexican Empire' for the new state, even though the Mexica had controlled only a section of the vast territory and faced rebellions from those they subordinated and opposition from those who remained free of them. In 1825, the Mexican government legislated for the establishment of a National Museum within which pre-Columbian antiquities could be assembled for exhibit. In such a way, the creators of the new Mexican nation began the appropriation of the pre-Hispanic past as part of their process of 'forging the nation', in both senses of the term.

3

The European Incursion, 1519– 1620



Aztec hegemony in central and southern Mexico during the fifteenth century had already accustomed the population to subordination, assimilation, and strategies of survival. The modern dominance of the central valley originated in the pre-Columbian era. Indian opponents of the Aztecs allied with the Spanish conquerors, in order to bring down Tenochtitlán. For a time, they made use of the fortuitous arrival of the strangers in the internal power struggle within Mesoamerica. In such a way, they believed they could restore a world freed of Aztec domination. Spanish objectives and methods, however, ensured that the real beneficiaries of the destruction of Tenochtitlán were not the Indians themselves, and that the post-Conquest era would not be one of vindication but deepening servitude. The Spaniards intended to put themselves into the position held by the Aztec elite and rule their conquered territory in a substantially similar manner, although on a different religious basis. They could not themselves foresee the dramatic impact of the Conquest over the subsequent decades.

The Spanish who arrived in Mesoamerica had passed through two previous conquests beforehand, those of the Muslim Kingdom of Granada and the Caribbean islands, both from 1492. Although scarcely knowing what they would find on the American mainland, they arrived with a set of assumptions about conquered territories of different religions. They came at an epoch of proven Castilian military prowess demonstrated in the Italian campaigns of the 'Gran Capitán' Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba against the French during the 1490s and 1500s. At the same time, Castile and Aragon, its associated eastern kingdom, were deeply involved in the power struggles of the Mediterranean and western-European orbit. The Italian involvement ensured the mingling of Renaissance intellectual and artistic influences with the Mozarabic inheritance of Iberia. From 1516, these would be complemented by Flemish influences, as a result of the Habsburg dynastic connection.

The Impact of the Fall of Tenochtitlán

The destruction of Aztec hegemony resulted from a series of intensely fought campaigns involving the use of Spanish artillery and naval power. The details are well known from the *ex post facto* narrative of Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1495–c. 1583), the title of whose work, *The True History of the Conquest of New Spain* (written in Guatemala by 1568 but first published in 1632), should immediately arouse the reader's suspicions, especially as the author began it when he was seventy years old. Recent studies by Ross Hassig and Hugh Thomas have emphasised the complex political and military situation into which the Extremaduran Hernán Cortés (1485–1547) inserted his rough Spanish band of some 600 men. Cortés, who had arrived in Hispaniola in 1504, succeeded in establishing a position on mainland America after the failure of two previous Spanish attempts in 1517 and 1518. Cortés took advantage of political rivalries within the Mesoamerican world. The American political groupings, once they had recovered from the shock of the initial encounter, equally intended to exploit the presence of a well-armed band of foreigners, in order to advance their own causes. The appearance of a non-American alien group within central Mexico suddenly exposed the precarious nature of Tenochtitlán's hegemony and invited opposition to rally against it. The Spanish presence tilted the political balance against Tenochtitlán for the first time since the late fourteenth century.

Cortés represented more the turn of the century *condottiere* than the royal servant. He behaved more as an independent actor on a newly

encountered political stage. By style he might well have been an exponent of the exercise of power and the methods of rulership outlined in Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1513). Even so, Cortés did not establish an independent, conquered territory under his own personal rule, but remained loyal to the Habsburg Emperor Charles V, who was also King of Spain (1516–56) and its associated European territories. Cortés's enemies in Spain portrayed him as an ambitious and untrustworthy adventurer and sought to ruin him. The Five Letters written by Cortés to Charles V sought to explain his position and prove his loyalty. In 1528–30, he travelled in person to Spain and was received at court in Toledo by the Emperor, who, nevertheless, appointed him Marqués del Valle de Oaxaca rather than Governor of New Spain. Cortés finally returned to Spain in 1540, five years after the successful establishment of the viceregal office in Mexico City, the former Tenochtitlán. He died in misery and poverty, ruined by litigation, in 1547.

Cortés was particularly fortunate in securing the assistance of the captive Indian woman, Malintzin, who spoke Náhuatl, the language of the Aztec Empire. Malintzin, known to the Spanish at the time as Doña Marina, became the symbolic Mexican figure of ‘La Malinche’, who, guilty by association, handed over the Indian world to the European conquerors. She played a crucial part in Cortés's dealings with Moctezuma. From this name comes the discredited action, ‘malinchismo’, which signifies the betrayal of Mexican integrity and values to foreigners. ‘Malinchismo’ (or ‘entreguismo’ [handing-over]) arouses intense opposition, and ‘La Malinche’ represents one of the fundamental symbols in Mexican popular culture.

Cortés's strategic advantage was to have arrived in Tenochtitlán at a time of political weakness within the governing regime. At the same time, rival and subordinated powers were seething with resentment at Aztec rule and searching for an opportunity to hit back. Although the city's hegemony had ostensibly reached its peak, Moctezuma's tactical errors provided the opportunity for a swift strike against the authority of the head of the Aztec state. The reduction of Tenochtitlán still required huge effort, because Aztec methods of warfare presented the Spanish with great difficulties. In the first place, the 7-m wide causeways linking the city to the lake shores could be cut for defensive purposes. This and their narrowness neutralised the Spanish advantage of horse-borne warfare; the Aztecs demonstrated great skill in archery; their stone-pointed spear blades cut better than Spanish steel; darts flung from throwers could penetrate armor and kill; stones from slings also inflicted damage on the Spaniards. As a result of sustained resistance, although undermined by the early impact of European diseases, the Spanish and their allies had to conquer the Aztec capital street by street.

It seems probable that the Spanish destruction of Tenochtitlán occurred at a time when the population of the Valley of Mexico had already reached the limit of the capacity of the land to sustain it. With a higher population density than in metropolitan Spain, the Valley possibly contained around 1.5 million inhabitants out of a total estimated population of 25 million for the entire zone between San Luis Potosí and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Pre-Hispanic cultures had exploited the land intensively, usually with some method of irrigation, in order to maximise cereal production. This delicate ecological system was overthrown at the Conquest, as Hispanic culture was in large part based on livestock raising, an occupation entirely unknown in pre-Columbian America. The Spanish had not come to Mexico for the

humanitarian purpose of sustaining the cereal system of a completely alien population, but in general terms to reproduce in Mesoamerica the pattern of life they were accustomed to in Castile. From their perspective, the indigenous population would fulfil a subordinate role in this process, as the physical instruments of sustaining Hispanic dominance.

Although the fall of Tenochtitlán was a swift and definitive occurrence, this did not imply that the Spanish domination of Mesoamerica (still less its northern extremities) would be a rapid process. Furthermore, Indian cooperation in the destruction of Aztec power ensured that Cortés and his band would have to take allied interests into consideration as well. The manner in which Indian states had brought the Spanish into their own political conflicts meant that the latter would have to learn to survive in a vast territory that remained overwhelmingly native American in character. Mesoamerica did not become automatically Hispanic in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of Moctezuma II's empire. Indigenous population decline ultimately assisted the process of Hispanisation, but the Europeans still remained a minority.

The Spaniards had initially expected to replace the Aztec ruling class and administer their Mesoamerican territories in much the same way. Given their small numbers, they could hardly impose a completely different order on the indigenous population. Early Hispanic colonialism, then, consisted of little more than piecemeal measures designed to accustom the American inhabitants to an alien ruling caste and accommodate the conquerors and first settlers to the new environment. The unsuspected consequence of the European incursion was the American population catastrophe. Sherburne Cook and Woodrow Borah estimated in 1971 that a 95 per cent fall in population took place, leaving an indigenous population of around 1.2

million by the 1620s. Although the first of the great sixteenth-century epidemics struck in 1520–1 before the Spanish and their Indian allies had taken Tenochtitlán, the indigenous population began its rapid decline first during the epidemic of 1545–8, as by 1548 the level had fallen to 6.3 million, and again in 1576–81. Between 1568 and 1591, the population fell from 2.64 to 1.37 million. Accordingly, the original Spanish intentions disintegrated. The magnitude of this population collapse still needs to be digested, whatever the preferred figures. There have been few parallels in the history of humanity. By the end of the sixteenth century, new realities, derived from both the colonial system and the territorial advance of Hispanic power northwards well beyond the frontiers of the Aztec empire, fundamentally altered the nature of Mesoamerica.

The Imposition of Christianity

The Spanish intention was that the Catholic religion would become the exclusive religion of the newly acquired dominions. Spanish Catholicism had passed through a thorough reform during the reign of Isabella (1479–1504), which reaffirmed medieval doctrines but tightened up discipline and practice. State authority, reinforced through the newly introduced Holy Office of the Inquisition after 1480, complemented the power of the Church. A strengthened episcopate, closely tied to the crown, took the leadership of the reformed Church along with the mendicant orders.

In New Spain, Indian responses to the appearance of Christianity differed widely and according to generation. The Franciscan friars began their work in the mid-1520s, and it was continued by the first Bishop of Mexico, Fray Juan de Zumárraga, during the 1530s. Among the first twelve – the ‘apostles’, as they were called – was Fray Toribio de Motolinía, who took part in the foundation of the Hispanic city of Puebla de los Angeles in 1531 adjacent to Cholula, the once great city and holy place of Quetzalcóatl. Motolinía founded the convent of Atlixco just south of the city, and became guardian of the Tlaxcala convent. He learned Náhuatl, and sought to disseminate knowledge of the pre-Columbian peoples through his *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*, published in 1541.

The historical interpretation of the impact of Christianity upon the American population has varied greatly over the past decades since the publication of Robert Ricard's *La conquête spirituelle du Mexique* in 1933. The emphasis has shifted from the friars themselves and the notion of a

conquering Church to a subtle process of acculturation. The American population adjusted to those aspects of Christianity which accorded with their own vision of the cosmos and they accommodated to the political reality of the superimposition of a new religious power backed by the authority of the colonial state. For the incoming Christian clergy, the indigenous religions, clearly different from the Islam they had encountered in Granada and North Africa, represented 'paganism'. At the same time, they did constitute in the eyes of the friars a form of authentic religious experience, which had been captured by demonic powers. The process of evangelization did not result in a full-scale onslaught on indigenous belief but in an attempt to shift this into Christian directions. The Hispanic cults of the saints and the many and varied forms of the Virgin Mary, the product of an even earlier grafting-on of 'pagan' cults in Europe and a conscious reaction to the exclusive monotheism of Islam, lent themselves to early adaptation to existing indigenous devotions. This, however, meant more than just a changing of the names, as by incorporation into the world of Roman Catholicism, indigenous America became gradually subsumed into a universal, religious power, the focus of which lay far away from the American world and had emerged from a completely different historical tradition.



Plate 3.1 The Ermita del Rosario in Antigua Veracruz. Cortés's second landing in the central coast of the Gulf of Mexico led him slightly inland to the Totonac sites of Cempoala and Quiahuitzlán, overlooking the sea. Further south, he founded the Villa Rica de Veracruz at a river mouth, north-east of the present-day port of Veracruz. This was the first Hispanic settlement on the American mainland. The Ermita seems to have been the first church there, although a previous church had been founded in Santo Domingo in the Caribbean in 1512. In Antigua (Villa Rica's current name), Cortés organised the first municipal council or *cabildo*), for the purpose of legitimizing his leadership. Lured inland by news of the wealth and power of Tenochtitlán, the Spanish band advanced in the direction of its enemy, Tlaxcala

(Photo by M. A. Anipkin)

Serge Gruzinski's *La conquête de l'imaginaire* (1988) portrayed the slow adaptation to Christianity as a process of 'occidentalization'. Through the gradual supersession of the oral and pictorial tradition of the indigenous cultures by the adoption of Roman script, the incorporation of the American

world into the culture of western Europe was given effect. For several decades the continuation of the pictographic tradition alongside the Hispanic literary culture made possible the communication of American religious beliefs and history to Europeans struggling with their own incomprehension. At the same time, European friars and scholars introduced the concepts of the late Renaissance into the American world. In such a way, the European inheritance of Ancient Greece and Rome entered the Americas, portrayed as the 'New World', along with the Christianity that had supplanted them in the 'Old World'. The Europeans rejected indigenous cyclical concepts of time and replaced them with the idea of history as a linear process.

The surviving American population learned not only to adapt to the new spiritual order but also to take it over when it suited their own purpose. Christian terms of reference became transformed in Indian hands to be turned against the brutality and usurpation of the Conquerors. In this they received support from the religious orders, which were engaged in the contradictory enterprise of undermining the foundations of indigenous religious belief while at the same time seeking to protect Indians from physical and material abuse by their own Spanish compatriots. Accordingly, the deep ambiguities of Spanish colonialism – exploitation versus evangelisation – appeared in the very first years. Local Indian communities beyond the immediate reach of Christian authorities concealed and preserved what they could of their own inheritance, in order to keep faith with the ancestors and maintain the symbols which had always given meaning to the universe.

The conversion of small numbers produced factions allied to Spanish rule, a situation which divided Indian communities and complicated

responses to the imposition of colonial rule. The objective of Christian conversion was to strengthen alternative sources of legitimacy to the traditional authority of the *tlatoani*, who presided over the basic American social organisation, the *altepetl*. Charles Gibson, writing in 1952, pointed to the strong resistance in Tlaxcala to an early introduction of Christianity. Outside central Mexico, resistance to Christianity was sometimes violent. The Oaxaca sierra continued to resist into the 1550s, the Otomís north of the Valley of Mexico until the late 1560s, and parts of Michoacán into the 1580s.



Plate 3.2 Mexico City Cathedral. The bishopric was established in 1530, subordinate to the archdiocese of Seville. The first bishop, Franciscan Fray Juan de Zumárraga, had already arrived in New Spain in 1528. He returned to Spain for consecration in Valladolid in 1533. Returning to Mexico in mid-1534, his rudimentary cathedral was a church hastily constructed on the site of the demolished Temple of Huitzilopochtli by order of Cortés in 1524. The present Cathedral of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was not begun until 1573, delayed by flooding in 1629, and not completed until Manuel Tolsá's final work in the 1790s. The foundations were still being stabilised in the 1990s

(Photograph by M. A. Anipkin, 2015)

The Maya, who had been the first to encounter the Europeans on their coasts in 1517, struggled in the decades from the 1520s to the 1560s to understand what had happened and how to respond. As in the case of other American groups with long cultural and religious traditions, they sought to preserve what they could of their traditional way of life. Frequent antagonism with the Spanish interlopers culminated in the Maya resistance

movement of 1546–7. Failure to expel the *dzules* (white intruders), however, resulted in a further attempt at evangelisation by the friars. The Franciscans conducted in 1562 over a six-month period a series of detailed investigations of Maya religious practice, and were shocked to discover the extent to which traditional beliefs had been preserved. Accordingly, under the leadership of Fray Diego de Landa, who had arrived in New Spain in the late 1540s, they set out to make a terrible example of those they identified as back-sliders without regard to proper legal formalities. Large numbers of people were subjected to torture and as many of the Maya sacred books as could be found were burned to the great affliction of those who witnessed the scene. The burning of the Maya manuscripts symbolized in the minds of the friars the destruction of the demons worshipped in secret by the Yucatecan communities. For the Maya, it represented the destruction of their own identity and of the perception of the cosmos which had taken centuries to elaborate.

The Christianization of New Spain proved to be an incomplete process. Residual pre-Columbian beliefs and practices survived within the new religion and coloured its expression. Although a keen proponent of the preservation of indigenous cultural traditions, the Franciscan Fray Bernardino de Sahagún suspected that the emerging cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe, which originated with the vision at Tepeyac in 1531, represented a post-Conquest adaptation of the Aztec cult of Tonantzin, the moon goddess, who on occasions doubled with Coatlicue, the mother goddess who had given birth to Huitzilopochtli, conceived without prior intercourse. Sahagún's *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España*, written between 1558 and 1569, attempted to provide his fellow friars with an encyclopaedia of knowledge concerning the indigenous cultures, which

he had come to admire. Considerable attention was given to the cult of Quetzalcóatl. Sahagún, however, stressed the mortality of the god and his historic role in the city of Tula. In such a way, he sought to avoid any inference that Quetzalcóatl might have represented an earlier Christian evangelization of America, in the form perhaps of the Apostle Thomas.

A series of three ecclesiastical councils met during the course of the sixteenth century to give shape to the newly established Church in New Spain. In 1565, the Second Mexican Ecclesiastical Council met to discuss how to give effect to the decisions of the Council of Trent (1546–63). Catholic Christianity, redefined and reasserted at the Counter-Reformation, was a synthesis which required total assent from its believers. Its main thrust was both on individual belief or conscience and on collective observation of traditional precepts and practices. On principle, Catholicism remained absolutely exclusive of any other religious belief: in practice, it enabled incorporation of whatever did not conflict outright with it. Providing the authority of the teaching Church was upheld on principle, many variants appeared in practice. Accordingly, when the Church sought to remove Aztec religious practice, it encouraged, on the other hand, the communal expression of religion by indigenous communities. As a result, indigenous life gradually became expressed in Christianized terms, whether in the festivals celebrated or the name of the village or town itself. If anything, the impact of Christianity remained ambivalent – entrenched but superficial, permitting but not permitting, both at the same time.

One centrally important Indian institution encapsulated popular resistance to official Christian impositions and the determination to conserve traditional practices: this was the religious confraternity (*cofradía*) in the Indian villages. These lay-brotherhoods existed at the Hispanic level

as well, but there they functioned within an officially sanctioned context and on the Spanish model. Indian confraternities, however, frequently expressed a disguised resistance to Hispanic religious norms. Their emergence, considerably after the impact of the Conquest had been felt, reflected yet another indigenous strategy of survival at the base levels of colonial society. The Indian confraternity emerged at a time of moral crisis for the indigenous population, confronted as it was by the appalling specter of population collapse and the constant threat of Hispanic encroachment and subversion. This religious defense sought to consolidate what had been left of Indian beliefs and weld them into a form sufficiently coherent to recreate local identity within the changed circumstances of the later sixteenth century. Significantly, the Indian confraternity was not usually under the control of parish priests. Furthermore, the appropriate indigenous language, rather than Spanish, was the usual medium of business. As they developed during the seventeenth century, these corporations bolstered the identity of the vulnerable indigenous community.



Plate 3.3 Interior of the Mexico City Franciscan Church, Madero Avenue. The present church, dating from the 1710s was only the side chapel a larger convent church, which had to be re-built several times because it was sinking into the soil. The convent complex, formerly the Franciscan headquarters in New Spain, was demolished during the Liberal Reform era of 1855–76. The side entrance, now the principal entry down steps has a decorated façade from the mid-1760s. Inside, there is a painting of St. Francis receiving the stigmata

(Photograph by M. A. Anipkin, 2015)

The early evangelization of New Spain remained the work of the regular orders, principally the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians. By 1560, these three orders controlled some 160 houses for their members, who totalled just over 800. The first members of the Society of Jesus, founded by St Ignatius Loyola, arrived in New Spain during the autumn of 1572. In the following year, the principal Jesuit institution in Mexico City, the College of SS Peter and Paul, was founded. The Holy Office of the Inquisition had been established in New Spain in the previous year, though

it exercised no jurisdiction over Indians. The arrival of the Inquisition a half a century after the Conquest did not imply any laxity beforehand, as the full faculties of inquisition had been exercised by the bishops themselves. The Inquisition henceforth controlled the printed word, not just in Spanish but in the indigenous languages as well. The numbers of Catholic clergy continued to grow: from 1,500 in 1580 to 3,000 in 1650. However, their attention was drawn increasingly away from the Indians through internal struggles between the regular and secular clergy, within and between the religious orders, and between the clergy and the laity.

Indian Institutions and Spanish Encomenderos

The Indian nobility in Mexico, as in Peru, had sought to benefit from the overthrow of the imperial hierarchy. The *caciques*, as the Spanish called them, specifically received royal protection from 1557, providing they were Christians. They became preferred instruments of colonial control, although in New Spain their influence diminished as their internal base of power collapsed with Indian population decline. In contrast to Peru, the indigenous nobility did not survive as a political group into the eighteenth century. The *tlatoani* tradition of the Aztec world became transposed on to whoever exercised effective power in the locality and could act as the protector of a vulnerable populace in relation to higher authorities.

The private-enterprise nature of the Conquest meant that the conquerors' interests preceded definition of those of the Spanish state. In the first instance, a working compromise operated between the two in accordance with which the private interests exercised authority over the conquered population until the crown was able to establish organs of its own. Under this compromise, the *encomienda* system was transposed from the Spanish Caribbean islands to New Spain after 1521. Each *encomendero*, or specifically commissioned individual, received in trust groups of Indians, and undertook to Christianize them in return for their labor services and tribute payments. No land transfer was legally involved. The *encomendero* did not own the Indians as his property, and only the crown remained their 'lord'. This system was imposed by the Conquerors above the existing Indian nobility's structure of dependency. They regarded the *encomiendas* as their just rewards of conquest. In effect, the conquerors gained a large,

unpaid labor force, which considerably assisted their process of capital accumulation.

When the crown tried to prohibit *encomiendas* in 1523, Cortés objected, arguing disingenuously that they liberated the Indians from subjection to their native rulers. The crown soon faced the problem of *encomendero* desire to become a hereditary nobility in the new Spanish territory. Even so, it managed to secure jurisdiction over Tenochtitlán in 1526, prohibited *encomiendas* of more than 300 Indians in 1528, and finally in 1529 ejected Cortés from the Valley of Mexico, offering him instead the distant ‘Marquesado del Valle’ in Oaxaca with a few other scattered locations.

The *encomenderos* remained a powerful challenge to royal supremacy throughout the 1530s. Around thirty *encomiendas* remained in the Valley of Mexico, controlling some 180,000 tributaries. The *encomenderos* were strong enough to block the implementation of the New Laws of 1542–3, which tried to restrict the *encomiendas* to one lifetime and to prevent royal officials from holding them. However, the principle was established in the 1550s that the crown determined the tribute quotas. The central issues by then were inheritance of the *encomiendas* and the nature of Indian labor in the colony, especially after the opening of the silver mines in the previous decade. *Encomendero* power, already weakened by population losses and royal policies, was definitively broken by the crushing of the settlers’ conspiracy of 1566 and crown assumption of the richest *encomienda* in the Valley of Mexico at Cuautitlán.

The struggle for control of the labor force and the moral campaign to ensure fair treatment of the conquered population illustrated the strengths and weaknesses of the early modern Spanish state. Royal authority had

been steadily increasing since the definitive establishment of the Audiencia of Mexico in 1529 and the establishment of the viceroyalty in 1535. The *audiencia* was a typically Castilian institution, which had arisen as the principal expression of royal judicial authority during the High Middle Ages. Isabella had used the *audiencias* of Castile to curb the autonomous power of the nobility. The viceregal office was a typically Aragonese institution, which acted as the substitute of the king in the outlying territories of the medieval Aragonese-Catalan Empire in the Mediterranean. In the Indies, beginning with New Spain, it was put, however, to a specifically Castilian purpose: the enforcement of royal authority and the closer integration of the royal dominions. In reality, the Viceroy of New Spain became a power in his own right, with a court, to which the principal figures of the day would gravitate, and with an immense range of patronage. New Spain's first viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza (1535–50), came from one of the most distinguished noble families of Castile with a long tradition of military and diplomatic service. The *audiencia*, accordingly, was designed in part to limit the viceroy's actions and to call him to account when necessary. In such a way, a distant royal authority sought to maintain its position by pitting the governing bodies against one another. Both the *audiencia* and viceroy remained directly responsible to the Council of the Indies in Spain. The *audiencia*, as the principal court of law in the Indies, acted as the intermediary between local magistrates and the Council of the Indies, the high court of appeal. By contrast to the peninsular *audiencias*, those in the Americas not only exercised executive and legislative faculties, but also acted as the viceroy's consultative committee when required to do so. The *audiencia* could exercise the supreme office as the *audiencia*

gobernadora, if a viceroy died in office or before a replacement had arrived.

Between the 1530s and the 1550s the establishment of town and district officials (*corregidores* and *alcaldes mayores*), who exercised royal judicial and administrative authority, progressively increased alongside the pattern of privately controlled *encomiendas*. The crown had used the *corregidores* in Castile as a means of ensuring a controlling position in the towns, traditionally royal allies in the perennial conflicts with the territorial nobility. In the Indies, these officials increasingly tended to curb the original political autonomy of the municipal councils. Imperial Spain's financial difficulties ensured that the crown needed to control direct access to revenue. This situation helps to explain why the metropolitan government remained determined to prevent municipal councils in America from claiming the privilege of either forming representative bodies such as the Cortes of the Spanish kingdoms or sending representatives to the Castilian Cortes.

By the 1570s, there were 15 *corregimientos* in the Valley of Mexico alone, and a combined total of some 155 *corregidores* and *alcaldes mayores* in New Spain as a whole. An example of these political processes at work may be seen in the Mixteca, for instance. Cortés divided the Mixteca, which had submitted without a struggle on receipt of the news of the fall of Tenochtitlán, into some twenty *encomiendas* in 1524. Although the number of Mixtec *cacicazgos* was only around twelve on the eve of the Conquest, they roughly corresponded to them. Even so the crown began the process of constraining the *encomiendas* after 1531 by establishing the *corregimiento* of Teposcolula and in 1550 the *alcaldía mayor* of Yanhuitlán, still a district of major political and economic importance. This process of establishing

royal officials at the district level also had the effect of reducing the local importance of the Indian nobility. After the collapse of the two Mixteca rebellions of 1528–31 and 1548, the viceregal government consolidated Hispanic authority and the *caciques* increasingly adopted Spanish ways, including the Catholic religion. As elsewhere in New Spain, the decisive factor proved to be population decline. The population of the Mixteca Alta fell from 350,000 to 35,000 between 1520 and 1620, and did not begin to recover until after 1675.

Hispanic Presence and Indian Survival

Demographic collapse undermined the possibility of sustained and widespread resistance to the Europeans in the zones most affected. However, once they had recovered from the immediate shock of the European incursion, Indian cultures in what had become New Spain demonstrated a remarkable survival capacity. Acculturation led to Indian litigation through the colonial courts. The Spanish established their centres of power right in the midst of Indian population concentrations, as in the cases of the Valleys of Mexico, Puebla, and Oaxaca. Mexico City, unlike the new Spanish foundation of Lima in Peru, rose from the ruins of Tenochtitlán, in contrast to the Inca capital, Cuzco, which became a provincial capital retaining much of its Indian character. In this respect Mexico has been a living city since its foundation in the early fourteenth century. For the fourteen years between the fall of Tenochtitlán and the arrival of the first viceroy, it became virtually a conquerors' city-state, incorporating a large Indian populace, loosely subordinate to the universal monarchy of Emperor Charles V.

Charles Gibson examined the adaptation of the people of Tlaxcala, allies of Cortés, to the phenomenon of Hispanic domination. Tlaxcala had been defeated, though it had not been conquered in the same way that Tenochtitlán had. Nevertheless, Spanish colonial rule presented a completely new situation for the Tlaxcaltecs. Ultimately, a compromise would be worked out between the colonial authorities, who found their aspirations limited by realities, and the Tlaxcaltecs, who learned how to survive within the different structures of New Spain. The divisions between

administrators, religious orders, *encomenderos*, and landowners provided openings for Indian exploitation. In Tlaxcala, as elsewhere, the contradictions within Spanish colonial practice were much in evidence. The first task of integrating Tlaxcalan society into the Hispanic world had been performed by the first Franciscans, who sought to protect the population from the disasters which had befallen the inhabitants of the Caribbean islands after the 1490s. Local Indians, however, had first to digest the implications of these innovations for their own culture, which had evolved over the previous centuries. They accepted what they could reconcile with it, as in the case of municipal institutions, or what promoted their own interests as a people. By and large, the Indian economy in the 1530s and 1540s continued to operate with considerable freedom in Tlaxcala, which did not become a principal area of Hispanic settlement. Indian social structure initially also remained intact. By the end of the sixteenth century, however, Tlaxcala's deepening colonial situation had become evident, emphasized all the more by Indian population decline. The viceregal authorities removed the province's autonomy and Spanish landowners or workshop operators exerted pressure on labor. The local nobility lost control of the workforce.

Gibson published in 1964 a much larger study of the impact of Hispanic rule on the Nahuatl peoples of the Valley of Mexico, which showed the complexity of Indian responses to the Spanish presence. The Valley had a higher population density than anywhere in Spain. The Spanish presence upset the equilibrium of resources, a situation which accelerated population changes already set in motion through the impact of European diseases. The basic factor was the depletion of agricultural land in the decades after the Conquest. Spanish colonialism developed in the Valley of Mexico in a

radically deteriorating environment. Ultimately, the specific local circumstances determined the shape of inter-ethnic relations as the sixteenth century moved forward. Spanish pressure on an Indian society weakened by population loss concentrated on land, labor, and tribute-payment.

Castilian models of municipal organization were introduced to the American world. The principal focus of indigenous life became the colonial *pueblo*, a term that conveys considerably more than the English 'village'. The Spaniards adopted this term as the translation of the Náhuatl, *altepetl*, which signified a small lordship with subordinate settlements under its jurisdiction. In this way, the pre-Columbian *altepetl* combined political institutions, presided over either by a hereditary lord (*cacique*) or by a body of elders known as *principales*, with territorial extent. The colonial *pueblo*, however, was not the simple continuation of the *altepetl*, but a new and distinct institution on the European model, designed for the congregation of dispersed indigenous settlements into a political unit for the purpose of evangelization, government, and taxation. Colonial law recognised the *pueblo* as a corporate landowner and colonial practice used it as the basis of tribute receipt. In this way, the *pueblo* authorities, their positions guaranteed, were closely bound into the colonial structure. Possession of land and the establishment of Indian municipal institutions, with which the Hispanic population was forbidden to interfere, provided the *pueblo* with the means of subsistence and internal autonomy. Accordingly, the pre-Columbian association of land, religion, and ethnic identity became transposed on to the *pueblo*, known in colonial legal terms as the *república de indios*. The Castilians understood Indian structures of authority and territorial divisions in European terms, but they did not have accurate parallels. Accordingly, population centres under the fifty or so indigenous

nobles of the pre-Conquest Valley became head-towns of districts or *cabeceras*, while lesser units were subordinated to them as *sujetos*. The *cabecera-sujeto* relationship remained a constant, though changing, feature of the colonial era.

During the course of the colonial period, Hispanic practices and modes of thought gradually permeated Nahua culture. Initially, very few Indians gave up their native speech. Wills, public documents, and confraternity ledgers continued to be written in Náhuatl by professional native scribes throughout the colonial period. The Hispanic courts, furthermore, frequently employed interpreters in cases involving Indians. Similar practices occurred with regard to civil, religious, and hacienda authorities. James Lockhart published in 1992 an innovative study of what Nahua linguistic changes revealed concerning the degree of Hispanic penetration of the indigenous mind. In the Valley of Mexico, Nahua adaptation to Hispanic literary techniques in the generation after the Conquest led to the appearance of texts, particularly in the period 1545–65, which provided an entry into the subject. Lockhart found that in the early post-Conquest period from 1519 to the mid-1540s, very little cultural readjustment took place, the result of minimal routine contact. Only small changes, such as the addition of Christian names at baptism, took place. However, significant linguistic changes took place during the following century with the adoption of Spanish nouns and the influence of Spanish semantics. Náhuatl pronunciation and syntax, however, remained unaffected, although the language was written in Roman script for the first time. Lockhart attributed these changes to contact through intermediaries and interpreters. From the mid-seventeenth century onward, however, the incorporation of Spanish verbs, idioms, syntax, and sounds into Náhuatl spread rapidly through

large-scale individual contact. This investigation demonstrated how indigenous frameworks of reference survived for more than a century after the initial Conquest, while at the same time the Nahua peoples adopted from the Spanish what they saw as useful for their own survival.

After the violence of the Conquest and the abuses perpetrated by the conquerors and *encomenderos*, the Spanish Church and Crown became deeply sensitive concerning the moral basis of Hispanic rule in the Americas. The Dominican Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas's polemical attacks on these abuses led to the great debate in Valladolid (Spain) in 1550–1. In 1550, the Crown established the office of Indian General Procurator (*Procurador General de Indios*) within the *Audiencia*, in order to guarantee a proper hearing for Indian complaints against enslavement and coercive labor. Throughout his reign Philip II (1556–98) sought to maintain a high standard of administration throughout the empire, but the pressures of European warfare and the strain on the Spanish financial system made this difficult to achieve. Reports of corruption within the administration in New Spain led the king to appoint Archbishop Pedro Moya de Contreras, who was also Inquisitor General, as official Visitor General of the viceroyalty with full powers. Moya, who acted as interim viceroy in 1583–5, began a campaign to remove unreliable officials.

Hispanic Land Acquisition

The colonial courts generally defended the rights of peasant communities to at least subsistence landholdings and minimal local autonomy. Viceroy Luis de Velasco the Younger (1590–5) established the High Court of Indian Justice (*Juzgado General de los Indios*) in 1592. The relationship of Crown, colonial courts, and Indian communities formed a nexus, which provided some amount of protection for Indian pueblos and their properties. The crown was able, at least in theory, to balance defense of Indian property rights and labor freedom against the interests of Hispanic landed-proprietors, and thereby limit elite power. The Spanish colonial state upheld its authority by asserting a mediating role between peasant communities and Hispanic landowners. Accordingly, the two types of landownership and, often, ways of life, coexisted, sometimes uneasily, through the colonial era and into the nineteenth century.

Indian communities closed ranks in opposition to Spanish land usurpations, which threatened their economic viability and their cultural identity. The hacienda, an Hispanic private property and frequently diversified unit of production, became the predominant Spanish focus in the countryside by the end of the century. The term did not denote size. Indians from communities could work on hacienda lands as private individuals (*gañanes*) without becoming resident workers (*peones*) or losing their corporate identity. This practice had already appeared by the 1580s. It was symptomatic of the competition for labor between the Indian community and the private estate at a time of declining population. By the late colonial

period, there were some 160 haciendas in the Valley of Mexico, though varying in size and importance.

Population decline accelerated Spanish acquisition of land. The emphasis of royal policy during the early seventeenth century moved away from defense of the Indian population and its right to landownership towards the legal recognition of Spanish private estates. The demographic collapse also undermined the material position of the Church, which received a 10 per cent tithe on agricultural production. This was the Church's principal revenue, although the Crown, as Royal Patron of the American Church by papal commission, took a portion of this tithe. The decade 1575–85 became the critical period in the aftermath of heavy Indian mortality in the epidemic of 1575. Even though Indians were exempt from the tithe on their own produce, their labour on Hispanic lands produced the wealth which was taxed by Church and state. From 1550 to 1574, tithe revenues in the dioceses of Mexico, Michoacán, and Guadalajara had doubled or trebled, but fell sharply thereafter. A considerable decline in agricultural wealth took place, especially in those three areas, from the mid-1570s.

The Spanish state in 1577 instructed the Viceroy of New Spain to gather information through the medium of the district official concerning all important aspects of his territory. Between 1578 and 1582 a series of reports known as *Relaciones* was drawn up, of which 168 remain, giving details of 415 pueblos. They revealed the Indian perception of the break with traditional customs caused by the Conquest and the despair at the extent of population loss. Indian respondents blamed the burdens of imposed labor and mine work, forced resettlement, poor diet, and the absence of the guidance given by the old gods. As in Peru, they associated the imposition

of Christianity with the proliferation of human deaths. Traditional practices, though bereft of the priestly superstructure of pre-Columbian days, continued at the local level in Indian daily life, kept alive by travelling faith-healers (*curanderos*) who passed through a clandestine network largely unseen by the colonial authorities.

Territorial Advance and Repulse

The general absence of settled American communities across the north meant that northern society would be more fluid and more mobile than the Indian core zones of the centre and south. The north-centre and north was the Chichimeca frontier, the vast area controlled by free-ranging Indians whom the Aztecs had never pacified. This task fell to the Spanish. Viceroy Mendoza took an army of 500 Spaniards and 50,000 Indian allies into the present-day Guadalajara zone to crush opposition to the northward advance. The fiercely fought Mixton War (1541–2), in which Alvarado met his end, opened the northern frontier of New Spain. Its immediate consequence was the discovery of silver at Zacatecas and the foundation of the Hispanic city there in 1546. This new industrial centre became the starting point of the Royal Silver Highway across the Bajío, the north-central plateau, to Mexico City. Settlements and military posts known as *presidios* grew up along this route. The entire Zacatecas area, however, remained a war zone, as the highway continued to be subject to attack from the Zacateco Indians. For that reason, the Spanish and their Indian allies from the central zones, began a concerted campaign to pacify the unsubdued Indians from 1560 to 1585, known as the War of the Chichimecas. By 1591, Velasco the Younger had established control over the silver zones northwards from Zacatecas. Long after the fall of Tenochtitlán, then, the struggle for the subjugation of the north was still being fought by the Spanish. In effect, the conquest of New Spain, portrayed from a centre zone perspective as a lightning phenomenon of the years 1519–21, took, in fact, a further seventy years.

From July 1540 until April 1542, an advance expedition under Francisco Vázquez de Coronado moved up the Río Grande Valley into what is now New Mexico. The Spanish did not encounter legendary cities but the hundred or so settlements of the Pueblo Indians, organised in ten loose groupings linguistically distinct and situated for the most part on the margins of the river's flood plain. They represented population concentrations in contrast to the itinerant peoples of the surrounding areas. The Pueblo Indians dressed in cotton clothing, cultivated maize and other basic crops, lived in solid, terraced dwellings, and produced ceramics. It appears that at the time of contact with the Spanish, they were experiencing a cultural flourishing through the period 1300–1600. The Spanish presence was not initially welcomed, due to the pressure on local food supplies, and considerable conflict ensued. The Spanish did not reappear until 1581–2, the first of five other expeditions which finished with the establishment of Spanish rule in 1598.

In the meantime, the Spanish attempted to consolidate their position in the north-east by the foundation of Monterrey in 1596. In effect, this represented the end of a process which had begun with the conquest of the Bajío during the 1540s. The subsequent development of the north, which had experienced a completely different history to that of the sedentary cultures of the pre-Hispanic centre and south, showed the emergence of two distinct New Spains. The traditional zones of the centre-south, upon which Hispanic culture was grafted, contrasted significantly with the 'new' territories of the north, in which the Hispanic implant, with settlers armed for defense, would ultimately become the defining experience. Even so, the Spanish brought with them to the north colonies of Indians from the central

zone for resettlement, such as the Tlaxcaltecs who became early settlers in Coahuila.

The Spanish never completed the conquest of the north and far north, in spite of the large territorial expanse claimed there by the crown. Effective Indian resistance held the Spanish advance or managed to reverse it with significant loss of life, influence, and territory. The geo-politics of the Hispanic frontier was a complicated and long-term process, which has still not been fully understood. Ultimately, inability to extend effective Spanish power throughout those vast regions, the habitat of Indian groups themselves under pressure, helped to explain the loss of the far north to the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. In many respects, the missing link in the historical interpretation of the northern territories has been the absence of written records on the part of the major players in the game, the so-called 'barbarian Indians'.

4

New Spain, 1620–1770: Spanish Colonialism and American Society



The Americas became part of the Atlantic world from the sixteenth century. Each territory had a specific relationship to its metropolis and to the world market. The importance of Spain's two principal colonial territories, New Spain and Peru, lay in their role as principal world producers of silver. This commodity was in short supply in early modern Europe, although demand was great, especially as the main medium of exchange in the Asiatic trade. For nearly 400 years, until the collapse of world silver prices from the 1870s, Mexico, which surpassed Peru in capacity after the 1690s, placed large quantities of silver on the world market.

Spain's international position, however, deteriorated significantly after the 1640s. In many respects, the American territories were left to their own devices. Substantial colonial revenues remained within the American territories, allocated to the internal budget and to defense needs. In economic terms, the empire moved away from the Spanish metropolis

during the course of the seventeenth century, especially after the 1620s, when the transatlantic trade declined. In spite of strong efforts to tap American resources, Spain's European position worsened. This situation, however, did not lead to increased political independence on the part of the American territories, because the political centre of the empire still remained in Spain and the incentive to separate was absent at that time.

Spain and the Empire: Merchants, Financiers, and Markets

Historians, especially those viewing Ibero-America from Europeanist perspectives, have focused on the issue of how America fared during the European recession of the mid-seventeenth century. New Spain's economy appeared to be affected only after 1635–40, primarily for internal reasons, when it contracted until a gradual revival during the 1660s and a pulling out from recession after 1675. Spanish historians have identified the low point of Castile's fortunes in the period from the 1650s to the 1690s. Although Pierre Chaunu placed prime focus on the patterns of the Atlantic trade, later scholars have thrown light on the growth and behaviour of the internal market within the American territories, while internal routes of communication and distribution centres operated to supply colonial demand.

The picture emerges of a seventeenth-century New Spain with a rather ambiguous social structure, in which several leading figures, particularly the wholesalers, originated from lower social backgrounds. New Spain became a society in which the decisive element was not so much the landowner as such (who, of course, remained socially predominant) but the merchant-financier with accumulated capital, earned as a monopoly importer in the Atlantic trade, at his disposal. Traditional and modern practices coexisted among the merchant-financiers. Matrimony and personal ties continued to be the principal means of solidifying business interests. Nephews, other relatives, ‘compadres’, and friends formed broad

networks of interest over a wide geographical area from the capital cities into the countryside and through the span of economic activities. They did not generally purchase landed estates themselves. Such large-scale activities required a close working arrangement with the colonial state.

The Consulado of Mexico, established in 1592, expressed mercantile power in New Spain. Throughout the following two centuries, this corporation, which also formed a court for the adjudication of commercial disputes, dominated New Spain's economic life. The relationship between its members, overwhelmingly peninsular merchants from the Basque provinces and Santander, and the *audiencia* and viceregal government remained intimate. The Consulado, the *audiencia* and the ecclesiastical hierarchy represented the bulwarks of Spanish colonialism. They enabled the colonial system to function during the long period of metropolitan weakness between the 1640s and the 1760s, although modified considerably in relation to Mexican realities. Based in Mexico City alongside the viceregal government and court, these institutions expressed the predominance of the capital city within the political territory of New Spain. They provided in their different ways the linkages which held that vast (and expanding) territory together. During the seventeenth century, the Crown continually pressed the Consulado for loans and donations towards the cost of maintaining Spain's European position. The ability of the Consulado to resist such pressures further demonstrated the weakness of the imperial state. In the absence of an effective fiscal bureaucracy, the Crown leased Mexico City's sales-tax collection to the Consulado as a tax-farm for a specific period throughout the latter part of the seventeenth and first part of the eighteenth centuries. This process of tax-farming continued throughout the period from 1602 until 1753.

The contraction of Spanish power emphasised the growing importance of the internal market and the inter-colonial trades. Unlike Brazil or Peru, Mexico spanned both the Atlantic and the Pacific worlds. In effect, the Philippines were colonized and evangelized from Mexico rather than directly from Spain itself. From the late 1560s until 1813, the annual Manila Galleon took Mexican silver from the fledgling port of Acapulco across the Pacific to Manila, entrepôt of the China trade, in exchange for Chinese silks and porcelain brought from Canton. The metropolitan government sought to restrict cargoes and frequency on the grounds that the Asiatic trade diverted silver from the principal route which was to Europe. At the same time, the Crown in a series of laws issued from the 1590s to the 1630s tried to restrict, and then in 1631 and 1634 prohibit, trade between New Spain and Peru, with the particular intention of preventing Peruvian silver from passing into the Manila trade. Although not always possible to bring into full effect, the metropolitan objective continued to be that the overseas dependencies should trade directly with Spain (where permitted to do so) rather than with each other, and, still less, with the colonies of rival European states.

Practical commercial relations sometimes overcame policy restrictions. The principal case in point was the Mexico–Venezuela trade, which flourished in the century from the 1620s to the 1720s. The cacao trade passed through Maracaibo to Veracruz, superseding the previous route up the Pacific coast from Guayaquil after the legal restrictions of the 1630s. Venezuelan planters were able to exchange cacao, in great demand at the time as the principal popular drink before the development of coffee, for Mexican silver, and thereby broaden their own capacity to import manufactures, mostly from foreign sources. Such practices conflicted with

the strict interpretation of the principles of empire. The metropolitan government, however, was too weak to stop them. The device it eventually adopted in 1728 was the chartered, monopoly company. The aim of the Caracas Company, controlled by Basque merchants from Guipúzcoa, was to divert the cacao trade away from New Spain and reorient it directly to the peninsula.

The Mining Sector

Although the mining industry continued to prosper during the 1620s and viceregal government revenue reached peak levels, an overall downturn had already begun in the long term. A depression set in during the period from 1630 to 1660. Even so, regional variations appeared within that pattern. The principal zone of production continued to be Zacatecas, which was passing through its peak period between 1615 and 1635, while Parral (Chihuahua), opened in 1631, reached its peak during the 1630s. The state of the mines rather than shortage of manpower explained the problems faced in the Zacatecas zone. Furthermore, New Spain's proportion of the transatlantic trade declined after the 1620s in relation to Peru's share, but Spain's Atlantic trade was in overall decline. Demand for Spanish products diminished as New Spain produced more at home. In the same period, the cost of defense rose within the Americas and the Philippines in view of the threat from the Dutch, French, and English, and the general insecurity of the seas. As a result, the viceregal administration retained an increasing proportion of silver revenue within New Spain itself. Contraband export of coined silver – New Spain's way of bypassing the colonial monopoly and gaining direct access to the international market – accounted for a significant share of Atlantic commerce. In 1660, the colonial authorities estimated that untaxed silver accounted for one-third more than registered shipments.

New Spain's adaptation to the adverse conditions resulting from heavy indigenous population loss accounted for the decline in demand for Spanish produce. By the 1620s, the Indian population had fallen as low as 1.2

million. The Hispanic *haciendas* superseded the Indian communities as principal food suppliers, and a variety of labour systems were adopted to compensate for the fall in population. By the mid-seventeenth century, the mining sector had already transferred to predominantly free, salaried labour rather than labour drafts from the villages, or indebted workers. Earlier use of negro slavery did not have lasting significance in New Spain. Zacatecas, located considerably north of the main centres of indigenous settlement, owed its predominance to its ability to adapt to the new conditions in terms of capital and labour. The overall significance of silver ensured that the prosperity of the Zacatecas zone of production influenced the viceregal economy as a whole.

Recovery began late in the seventeenth century. Mexican mining production rose some 30 per cent between 1671–80 and 1691–1700. One of the key zones of recovery was Sombrerete, north of the city of Zacatecas. By the 1690s, total production in New Spain reached 50,751,914 pesos, slightly below the 1611–20 level of 53,646,127 pesos. New Spain became the world's chief supplier of silver by overtaking Peruvian production at the end of the seventeenth century. Between 1695–99 and 1805–9, the distance between these two major world producers increased. In New Spain, silver production grew at the rate of 1.7 per cent p.a. (or fivefold) in that broad period, when population grew at the rate of 0.5 per cent p.a. Mintage of coin increased from 19.6 million pesos in 1695–99 to 122 million pesos in 1805–9. The gold boom in the south-eastern Brazilian province of Minas Gerais from the 1690s combined with existing supplies from New Granada and West Africa to provide an abundance of gold on the world market until the mid-1720s. As a result, the price of silver rose.

There has been much discussion concerning both the periodization of the recovery of silver and the impact of the mining sector on the rest of the economy. The real value of mining output grew more rapidly during the first half of the eighteenth century than in the second half, the century associated with the rising importance of the Bajío mining city of Guanajuato.

New Spain's highest production rate was in the period between 1695–9 and 1720–4, at 3.2 per cent p.a., with production averaging 10 million pesos annually during the early 1720s. A period of stagnation followed, but between 1740–4 and 1745–9 the growth rate reached 4.1 per cent p.a., with annual production averaging up to 12 million pesos in the late 1740s. Two decades of fluctuation came next, after which renewed high rates continued until the mid-1790s. Production reached 16–20 million pesos during the 1770s and 1780s. An abrupt decline accompanied the subsistence crisis of 1785–6. During the decade of international warfare and continuing inflation at home, the rate of production collapsed to 0.1 per cent between 1795–9 and 1805–9.



Plate 4.1 The Silver-Mining City of Guanajuato. Although this water-colour was painted in 1840 by the British artist, Daniel Egerton, the general aspect of the city, founded in 1554, would have changed little over the preceding decades. The city population grew from 48,000 in 1742 to 71,000 1803. The province of Guanajuato, with 397,924 inhabitants in 1793, was the most highly urbanised and ethnically diverse in the viceroyalty. The woollen town of San Miguel el Grande, for instance, already had a population around 20,000 by 1793

(By kind permission of the Roberto Mayer Collection, Mexico City:
photo by Adrián Bodek)

Further discoveries of silver deposits, for instance in 1701 in the province of Chihuahua, took the frontier further northwards. Since a total of 60 million pesos was produced between 1703 and 1737, one-quarter of the viceroyalty's total output, Chihuahua played a major role in the economic growth of New Spain during the first half of the eighteenth century. Part of the explanation may have been the paradoxical behaviour of the Zacatecas zone, which between 1725 and 1765 was the only major centre contracting

or stagnating. In Chihuahua, the Santa Eulalia mine provided the focus of expansion, with the town of San Felipe el Real de Chihuahua founded in 1718 in response. Silver, as on all other occasions, attracted population northwards from elsewhere within New Spain. Cheryl Martin has emphasised the fluidity of social relations beyond the central zones of New Spain: 'the social history of colonial Mexico was everywhere marked by the constant negotiation of social boundaries', though especially so in the north.

Mine operators rarely confined their investments solely to that costly and volatile activity, but spread their interests across a range of activities that included agriculture, finance, and industry. They were closely connected to merchant financial backers, who acted not only as guarantors, but also as creditors and investors. This relationship was logical in view of the merchants' predominant role as importers of European commodities. Effectively, they controlled the market price of imports in New Spain and paid for them largely with silver from the mines. The mining sector, though primarily linked to the export trade, profoundly affected the internal economy through its demand for inputs from the immediate locality and region. Its output, furthermore, provided the circulating medium used for commodity purchase, in both the domestic and the international economies.

Provincial Economies and Commercial Networks

A broad range of textiles was produced in New Spain, in spite of the ostensible colonial situation. Metropolitan Spain's industries, in decline from the 1590s at the latest, could not supply demand in the colonies. At the same time, foreign products passed through the Seville and Cádiz trades along with Spanish goods, which increasingly catered to a restricted, luxury market. Local production in the American territories responded to home demand. Handicraft and domestic production predominated, though they were concentrated in specific areas, notably Puebla-Tlaxcala, the Bajío, Michoacán, the Guadalajara district, Oaxaca both in the city and in specific villages in the valley and the sierra (such as Villa Alta), and in and around Mexico City. Heavy woollens tended to be produced in workshops known as *obrajes* – there were thirty-five in Puebla in 1604.

The Spanish colonisers added woollens to the indigenous tradition of cotton-textile production. At the same time, mercantile capital enabled immigrant Spanish artisans and indigenous weavers to expand production in response largely to urban demand among the Hispanic and mixed components of the population. Indian communities continued to weave their own clothing, several villages specialising in the production of particular types or styles of textile and trading them through the local market networks. The highland Oaxaca village of Villa Alta became one of the principal suppliers of cotton cloth, the raw material brought up from the lowland villages of the Gulf hinterland. Textiles from Villa Alta reached as far as the mining zones of the centre-north. Hispanic merchants, acting through the agency of the district administrators, managed to interpose

themselves at the three stages of the textile process – raw material production, manufacture, and distribution. Nevertheless, indigenous producers did not entirely lose their autonomy, in spite of increased mercantile and administrative pressures during the eighteenth century.

The principal Spanish innovation was the enclosed woollen-textile workshop known as the *obraje*. This institution grew in response to the emergence of Hispanic cities and mining zones in the centre-north. It first arose from the combination of cheap labour in the *encomienda* with the emerging livestock economy. Cheap labour-enabled Hispanic producers to accumulate sufficient capital to maintain these workshops, though the technological level remained basic. Even though they supplied a steady colonial demand, they could not be described as the basis of a modern manufacturing industry. As with mining, few, if any, investors concentrated their interests in manufacturing; on the contrary, their range of activities from landowning to commerce or mine investment was impressive. In Querétaro, which became the principal *obraje* town during the eighteenth century, operators of workshops also tended to be landowners and city councillors. Several Bajío towns north of Querétaro also operated as textile centres, producing woollens of differing types: San Miguel el Grande and Acámbaro were the two principal areas.

Between the 1680s and 1730s, Puebla lost the earlier market for its agricultural and industrial products in the north-centre to the rising production areas in the Bajío and Guadalajara. As a result, Puebla, which until the late seventeenth century had supplied Zacatecas, was no longer able to exchange its products for silver. The contraction of the regional economy had repercussions throughout the agricultural sector, particularly in the main wheat-producing districts of Atlixco, Huejotzingo, and Cholula.

Within the region, however, the Tepeaca district, the principal maize district, continued to expand until the middle of the 1800s. Facing competition from Querétaro's woollen industry, Puebla's broadcloth manufacture declined rapidly. As sheep-raising moved northwards and the Bajío transferred from livestock to cereals, the cost of raw-material supply favoured Querétaro over Puebla. Factors such as this, combined with low-yield agricultural production, influenced Puebla's transfer to cotton manufacture from the 1740s. Producers in the province, furthermore, had easier access to the two principal areas of cotton cultivation on the Gulf and Pacific coasts.

Artisan and domestic cotton manufacture, in which women featured prominently, enabled Puebla to regain access to the Mexico City market and even further north during the mid-eighteenth century. The growth of cotton manufacture in Puebla stimulated raw-material production in the central Veracruz lowlands. Frequently, increased textile production in New Spain responded to adverse conditions in the transatlantic trade. Guy Thomson suggests that the resumption of transatlantic warfare from the 1740s may have encouraged importers mainly based in Veracruz to reinvest in textile manufacture within New Spain. A similar pattern would recur in the early 1780s and more especially after 1795, even though the technological backwardness of New Spain's textile sector was gradually becoming exposed to competition from mechanised production in north-western Europe.

The Consolidation of the Hispanic Private Estate

Between the 1590s and the 1640s the Hispanic private estate consolidated its position across the central zones which had previously been densely populated. Indian population decline, which reached its lowest point between 1620 and 1640, explained in part the transition to the new type of landed proprietorship. As much Hispanic land acquisition had no legal form, the crown instituted a process of regularisation, known as '*composición*', which provided for the issue of legal titles by the viceregal government in return for payment of a fee. This process reached its climax during the 1640s. In this way, the hacienda consolidated its base in a countryside which a hundred years earlier had been characterised by the predominance of the indigenous peasant community.

Society and economy in New Spain neither consisted of isolated or virtually autonomous pockets nor was dominated by great estates oriented largely inwards. Instead, recent research has argued that market-orientation provided the major factor in economic organization, even allowing for the continuation of pre-capitalist labour relations on the land or in the textile sector. Both the Hispanic private estate and the indigenous peasant community related as much to towns and cities with slowly expanding populations as to the land itself. In notable instances, local production was similarly oriented towards mining communities, which had a heavy demand for foodstuffs, clothing, and work animals. Complex internal trade networks functioned at many levels, providing linkages across broad ranges of territory.

Different forms of labour organisation existed on many *haciendas* across central New Spain. Permanent labourers, who no longer associated with Indian communities, had their own places of residence on hacienda land and received a weekly maize ration as part of their payment. Spanish colonial law insisted on the free legal status of these workers, and the *audiencia* in test cases regularly upheld their right to take their labour where they chose. A major problem, however, lay not so much in resident-worker indebtedness to employers but in the frequent inability of hard-pressed estates to honour their financial obligations to their workers. A range of temporary workers and seasonal workers from the villages complemented the labour structure on the *haciendas*.

The hacienda predominated as the principal Hispanic form of landownership from the cereal-producing valleys of Puebla northwards into the Bajío. In the provinces of Puebla and Mexico, which covered the bulk of central Mexican territory, the indigenous community remained strongly present, even growing in resilience as population slowly recovered from the latter part of the seventeenth century. Further south, in the province of Oaxaca, the Indian communities overwhelmingly predominated as the principal owners of land. The hacienda emerged in the Valley of Oaxaca, in the Valley of Ejutla, in the Mixteca Alta, and in the southern Isthmus, but apart from the latter, these tended to be hard-pressed estates with frequent changes of ownership.

Instability of ownership was one of the most salient characteristics of the Hispanic private estate. The legal cost of inheritance alone explained this. Furthermore, meteorological uncertainties and the high costs of production and marketing kept profits low, except in the case of the fringe of sugar estates located below the central valleys of Mexico and Puebla. On

the whole, large incomes were earned in transatlantic commerce or in silver mining rather than in cereal agriculture.

Livestock estates oriented towards urban markets, mining communities, or the woollen textile sector tended to fare better than the cereal estate. This helped to account for the gradual expansion of the hacienda northwards into San Luis Potosí, Durango, and Coahuila, which had never been predominantly areas of indigenous community agriculture. Between the 1730s and the 1800s, the territorial empire of the Marqués de Aguayo, for instance, increased to a dimension that equalled two-thirds of the size of Portugal. The Aguayos left their northern estates in the hands of administrators, backed by armed retinues to defend against Indian marauders, and lived off the revenues in Mexico City, where they possessed four palatial residences. Their speciality was sheep raising – they had over 200,000 head – for the supply of meat to the capital and wool to the textile workshops. The title had been awarded in 1682, but the land purchases dated from the 1580s. Marriage joined the Aguayo line to the Conde de San Pedro del Álamo title in 1734. The Count's 1.9 million acres of sheep-rearing land had their core in Durango. The great estates of the north arose during the latter part of the seventeenth century in response to the economic and demographic changes of the central zone. The shift in the Bajío from livestock production to cereal agriculture during the eighteenth century emphasized this relationship all the more. The northern estates and towns tended to become the economic hinterland of the flourishing economy and society of the eighteenth-century Bajío.

Indian Communities

During this broad period, a formerly Indian society became transformed into a colonial, Hispano-mestizo culture. The most striking feature was territorial advance northwards beyond the limits of pre-Columbian polities. Within New Spain proper, local Indian communities learned to live with the hacienda, often in forms of mutual dependence. Although colonial archives are replete with documents revealing disputes between *haciendas* and peasant villages over land, labour usage, and water rights, the daily reality tended to reflect cooperation rather than conflict. While colonial legal documents testified to instances of hacienda cattle invading peasant subsistence lands or of hacienda administrators verbally or physically abusing Indian workers, the private estate frequently depended on labour from the villages at times of planting and harvest. Villagers, furthermore, needed extra income to cover the cost of tribute payment to the royal authorities, ecclesiastical dues, and the costs of maintaining their own confraternity cults.

Indian communities participated in the colonial economy as producers and consumers. They frequently traded in their own right, in response to fiscal and market pressures. Such pressures intensified local commercial activity and led also to labour migration. In many pueblos, males and females worked as artisans, as well as in the fields. A considerable degree of monetarization could be seen in the villages, in response to the range of activities pursued. Accordingly, the extent of stratification was probably higher than has been supposed. The supply of credit, voluntary or coerced,

came through the *repartimiento* administered by royal district officials acting informally as agents of the merchant-financiers. District officials often tried to impose local commercial monopolies in order to push down purchase prices and raise the cost of supplies. They struggled to bind Indian producers within a framework of credit and debt. These district officials, with their network of dependency, formed less a part of the colonial state than part of the local power structure. Accordingly, it would be wrong to portray them as powerless representatives of a viceregal government. They should be seen primarily in relation to the merchant-financiers who sustained them and to the local population which they sought to dominate. The imperial government found itself caught between moral protection of Indian communities and the economic need to integrate peasant and artisan producers more closely into the wider economy. Indian communities with strong artisan and commercial traditions did not need monopolies imposed by outsiders for the discharge of their produce. Nevertheless, defenders of coercion, recognised by bishops and senior magistrates as an abuse, belittled Indian economic capacity, in order to justify control.

New Spain's Baroque Culture

The style of art and architecture known as the Baroque, which predominated in central and southern Europe from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth century reached its climax in Spanish and Portuguese America several decades later. In Brazil and New Spain, for instance, important buildings in the Baroque style were still in construction after the mid-eighteenth century. This style had a deep and lasting influence in New Spain. The Baroque attempted a synthesis of opposite conditions and experiences, a balance of the tension between mortality and immortality, sensuality and asceticism, youth and age. Its predominant religious themes and architectural styles reflected less the influence of the classicism which had inspired the Italian Renaissance than the expressionism of the Hellenistic period. At the same time, the Baroque sentiment and style grew with the Catholic or Counter-Reformation, which reaffirmed and elaborated the traditional doctrines of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, the intermediary role of the priesthood, devotion to the Mother of God, the power of intercession by Mary and the saints, the spiritual value of the religious life, and the efficacy of popular and collective religious devotions and pilgrimages.

Diffusion of belief in such ideologies and symbols made possible the acceptance of official marginalization or punishment of those caught deviating from them. The rebellion of Portugal, which in 1640 struggled to break out of the union of crowns with Habsburg Spain, threw suspicion on crypto-Jews of Portuguese descent. Jews who refused to convert to Christianity had been expelled from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in

1537. The union of crowns had led to the arrival of Portuguese New Christians in the Spanish dominions, looking for commercial opportunities. In 1642, a total of 150 individuals were arrested within three or four days, and the Inquisition began a series of trials. Many suspected 'judaizers' were merchants involved in New Spain's principal activities. On 11 April 1649, the viceregal state staged the largest ever *auto da fe* in New Spain, in which twelve of the accused were burned after prior strangulation and one person was burned alive. Most of the remainder who were 'reconciled' were deported to Spain. After a series of denunciations followed by arrests, the Royal Criminal Court sentenced fourteen men from different social and ethnic backgrounds to death by public burning for homosexual activities, in accordance with a law passed by Isabella the Catholic in 1497. The sentences were carried out together on one day, 6 November 1658. From the trials, evidence appeared of widespread and long-term practices, which suggested that Mexico City, like other great cities of the epoch, had an active and varied underworld, the existence of which the authorities only rarely discovered. The attempted round-up included 123 persons, 99 of whom had managed to disappear. The public burnings, not unusual in Christian Europe, were meant to be exemplary demonstrations of the joint power of Church and state over individual actions, the autonomous significance of which did not enter into consideration. Further instances occurred in October 1660, in November 1673 when seven men were burned to death, and in 1687. These unpleasant events revealed the other face of the Catholic monarchy.

After the early construction of late Gothic churches such as those of the Franciscan convent in Huejotzingo (Puebla) or the Dominican convent in Yanhuatlán (Oaxaca), with its vaulted nave, the principal churches and

cathedrals in New Spain were Baroque structures, which in central and southern Mexico frequently involved indigenous craftsmen in their external decoration. The polychrome exuberance of the interior of Santa María Tonantzintla (Puebla) and the gold and stucco interiors of the Dominican convent of Oaxaca and the Chapel of the Rosary in Puebla amply illustrated this. Tonantzintla is situated in the vicinity of the pre-Columbian shrine of Cholula. The village itself, named after Tonantzin, means in Náhuatl ‘place of our mother’. By adding Santa María to the name of the village, the Christian evangelists intended that only the Virgin Mary would be the mother in that context. The church is a temple to the cult of the Mother of God, portrayed as the Immaculate Conception. There, as in so many other instances, the focus of Mexican Catholicism on the Virgin is evident from an early date. At the same time, the paradoxes of Mary's humanity but absence of sexuality (‘full of grace’), and maternity but virginity, are also clear.

Baroque painting in New Spain absorbed a wide range of European influences, which went beyond the Spanish schools of Seville and Madrid to include Titian and Rubens. Religious themes predominated, but distinct Hispanic American emphases emerged in the choices of Catholic doctrine or devotion. The preoccupation with the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption was a case in point. Early painters such as José Rodríguez Juárez (1617–61) expressed the triumphalism of the Counter-Reformation. Nicolás Rodríguez Juárez (1667–1734) and his brother Juan (1675–1728) represented the softer influences of the Seville school of Bartolomé Estéban Murillo (1617–82). They formed the core of a painting academy in Mexico City established in 1722, a testament to the rich cultural life of the viceregal

capital. José de Ibarra (1685–1756), who originated from Guadalajara, developed his talents in association with the academy.

The formidable output of Cristóbal de Villalpando (c. 1649–1714) brought the New Spanish baroque style to a climax during the 1680s and 1690s. Villalpando, who painted over five decades from the mid-1670s, received the patronage of the great Mexican cathedrals, notably Mexico City and Puebla, the principal religious houses, and the leading families. His subjects reflected the religious preoccupations of his time: the Immaculate Conception and Assumption (of which several were painted), the Trinity, the Eucharist, the Passion (painted for the Mexico City Franciscan convent in 1700–14), and the lives of the Saints (such as the scenes from the life of St Ignatius Loyola painted for the Jesuit Convent at Tepotzotlán, again in 1700–14). ‘The Triumph of the Catholic Church’, for instance, painted during the 1680s, showed as the two central motifs the crossed keys of St Peter and the elevated monstrance with the consecrated host. Around 1695, Villalpando painted a magnificent and intricately detailed picture of Mexico City's central square, showing not only the cathedral and viceregal palace at the sides and the two volcanoes in the background, but also the merchants’ booths and peasant women's stacks of vegetables and fruit for sale. Carriages and costumes of the time were clearly portrayed. The very different influences of Rubens and Zurbarán could be seen in his work.

Juan Correa (1646–1739) was also influenced by the colour and clarity of Rubens and the European Baroque. One of New Spain's principal painters, along with Villalpando, Correa took up similar themes. His ‘Scenes from the Life of St. Francis’ was painted in 1675–81 for the Convent of San Diego in Aguascalientes, and his ‘Scenes from the Life of

the Virgin' was painted in 1681 for the Rosary Chapel of the Azcapotzalco convent. Like Villalpando, he also painted for the Mexico City Cathedral sacristy.

After 1750, New Spain's most celebrated painter was the Oaxaca-born Miguel Cabrera (1695–1768), though little is known of his life until 1740, when his paintings received clear recognition in Querétaro. An orphaned son of mulattoes, he subsequently became official painter to the archdiocese of Mexico during the time of Archbishop Manuel Rubio y Salinas (1749–56). His works appeared in the capital, Tepotzotlán (the altar-piece, 1753–7), Querétaro (the altar-piece in the convent of Santa Rosa of Viterbo), and the mining centres of Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí, and Taxco (the altar-piece in the church of Santa Prisca, the church itself a paragon of the Mexican Baroque). Heavily influenced by the Seville school of Murillo, Cabrera covered a wide range of predominantly religious themes and a considerable number of portraits of viceroys and nobles, mainly by commission. In great demand, Cabrera consequently painted against time. He founded and directed a second Academy of Painting in Mexico City in 1753. His contribution to the developing Virgin of Guadalupe tradition could be seen in the publication of his *Maravilla Americana* in 1756.

Early attempts to reform the educational curriculum to keep abreast of contemporary European influences were snuffed out during the 1640s and 1650s by the Inquisition. The central figure was Fray Diego Rodríguez (1596–1668), who took the first Chair in Mathematics and Astronomy at the Royal and Pontifical University in 1637, and sought from that position to introduce the scientific ideas of Galileo and Kepler. For thirty years he argued for the application of science to the transformation of the physical world and for the removal of theology and metaphysics from the study of

science. Rodríguez formed the centre of a small circle of discussants that met semi-clandestinely in private homes to discuss the new ideas. The deteriorating political atmosphere of the 1640s, however, brought the suspicions of the Inquisition down upon them and a series of investigations and trials followed into the middle of the 1650s. A rapid hiding of books accompanied the Holy Office's edict imposing close censorship on scientific works in 1647. In July 1655, the Inquisition required all six booksellers in the city to subject their lists to the Holy Office for scrutiny on pain of fine and excommunication.

Colonial society produced two of Mexico's most important intellectual figures: Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora (1645–1700) and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651–95). Cabrera painted a posthumous portrait of Sor Juana in 1751. Sigüenza, a Jesuit during the years, 1662–8, was expelled from the Society. He subsequently pursued secular interests, and in 1672 became professor of Astrology and Mathematics at the Royal and Pontifical University until 1694, and used this position to attack the tradition of Aristotelian thought as the impediment to modern scientific methods. Although he never wrote a major scientific or philosophical work, Sigüenza remained highly influential in his time. His championship of the idea of a creole *patria*, which looked back to the Aztec past rather than to Europe as its Antiquity, influenced eighteenth-century thinkers such as the Jesuit historian, Francisco Xavier Clavigero (1731–87). He also promoted the cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Sigüenza's writings included a number of narratives, such as ‘Primavera Indiana’ (1668), ‘Paraíso occidental’ (1684), and ‘Los infortunios de Alonso Ramíres’ (1690). He wrote an eye-witness account of the riot of 8 June 1692 in Mexico City, which resulted from

government mismanagement of food supplies at a time of escalating prices following heavy rainfall.



Plate 4.2 Portrait of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz by Juan de Miranda. This is the oldest known painting of Sor Juana. There is some discussion as to whether it was the original, dating from between 1680 and 1688, or a copy made in 1713 by a later artist. It is located in the Rectory of the National University (UNAM). Cabrera in 1730 painted Sor Juana seated, based on Miranda's portrait. Both highlight the library in the background (Reproduced by kind permission of the Patrimonio Nacional, Mexico).

Sor Juana, influenced by the Spanish poets and dramatists, Lope de Vega (1562–1635) and Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600–81), and the poet Luis de Góngora (1561–1627), became Mexico's principal Baroque poet. Born on a hacienda in the province of Mexico, she was the illegitimate daughter of a Basque father and a Mexican mother. At a very early age she showed a brilliance that soon led to her transfer to Mexico City as a student of Latin. By the time she was fourteen, she joined the viceregal court of the period of the Marqués de Mancera (1664–73) in the entourage of the vicereine. Her brilliance attracted the attention of moral critics in the Church, who pressed her to become a nun. Although she bowed to this pressure and entered the Order of the Discalced Carmelites in 1667, the experience ruined her health. She left the convent and finally professed in the Jeronymite Order two years later. Although this ended her period at court, she was still able to continue her studies and publish, accumulating a vast library. Sor Juana's work was known in the viceregal courts and noble houses of the principal cities of the Hispanic world and in Madrid as well. Her writings, although circumscribed by the requirements of not offending against the Church, have interested the later twentieth century more than perhaps previous epochs. Octavio Paz was a foremost champion of her achievement, as his study, *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: las trampas de la fe* (Mexico City, 1982), demonstrated. Sor Juana's poetry revealed a predominantly intellectual content, resembling at times discourses examining the relationship of the mind to the exterior world. She wrote love poetry, which balanced the desires of the heart with the sublimity of the soul. Her most original poem, 'Primero sueño', written possibly around 1685, was a case in point, although this poem relates to her own intellectual development under the guise of a soul wandering, without a guide, through

the hemispheres during sleep. Sor Juana drew from the hermetic and neo-Platonist traditions of the Renaissance generally through the medium of the German Jesuit, Athanasius Kircher (1601–81). One-third of her work was for the theatre, writing on both religious and secular themes. Sor Juana's experience as a writer and scholar reflected the tensions and limitations of colonial culture. Although searching for greater knowledge through the sciences and experimentation, she was unaware of the rapid intellectual developments in Europe beyond the Counter-Reformation world. As a woman, and especially as a nun, her ecclesiastical superiors regarded her achievements as an affront to their view of the world. Sor Juana herself, although conversant in theology, made her reputation in the field of secular literature rather than religion. She vigorously defended her pursuit of secular learning and the right of women to education expressed in a celebrated polemical letter in 1691.

The Archbishop of Mexico, Francisco Aguiar y Seijas (d. 1698), a self-flagellating misogynist from Galicia, was determined to ban theatre performances, bullfights and cock-fighting, and to reverse what he perceived to be the laxity of community observance of the conventual rule. Sor Juana, although faced with Aguiar's disapproval, had powerful protectors both in Mexico and in Madrid. Her fortunes changed, however, in 1692–3, as her protective defences collapsed. The Bishop of Puebla turned against her, and her Jesuit confessor, who for decades acted as censor for the Inquisition, urged her to abandon literary and intellectual pursuits for what he considered to be a life of greater sanctity. Under ecclesiastical obedience as a nun, she complied, signed several confessions of her errors, and gave away her library, mathematical, and musical instruments in 1693. After inflicting severe punishments on herself, she died in the epidemic of

1695. A witty woman of wide-ranging scholarship, Sor Juana was obliged to submit to the moral pressure of suspicious and disapproving, celibate men. Much still remains unanswered concerning the silencing of Sor Juana by churchmen. Paz sees her as victim of political struggles within the Church combined with the aftermath of the riot of 1692, which the archbishop rather than the viceroyal was able to pacify. With strengthened powers and in an atmosphere of religious exaltation, the archbishop was able to extinguish the influence of a figure he regarded as proud and rebellious.

The Cult of the Virgin

The central devotion in New Spain was the cult of the Virgin, expressed particularly through the Immaculate Conception, a notion which in turn explained Mary's Assumption into Heaven. Although not proclaimed *ex cathedra* by the Papacy as a doctrine necessary to salvation until 1854, papal recognition of the cult's centrality led in 1760 to the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception as the patroness of Spain and the Indies. The specific devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe did not develop widely until later in this period. William Taylor has argued that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Guadalupe was not associated, as some historians have argued, with proto-nationalism, but with miracles, especially at times of drought. By the mid-seventeenth century, the official Church had clearly taken up the cult of Guadalupe. A secular cleric, Miguel Sánchez, first gave *guadalupanismo* its theological coherence, as a specifically creole cult, in a work published in Spanish in 1648 and in Náhuatl in the following year. In Sánchez's work, the Virgin of the Apocalypse replaced the Aztec eagle poised on the cactus plant. Although Indian attraction to Guadalupe stemmed from the obvious associations with Tonantzin, who could be adored in the guise of the Virgin Mary, this cult originated in Spain and had Hispanic adherents in New Spain from the latter part of the sixteenth century. Successful appeal to the Virgin of Guadalupe to stem the typhus epidemic of 1737 in Mexico City appears to have provided the turning point in the dissemination of the cult. Thereafter, the Guadalupe devotion increased significantly in New Spain, although Tepeyac had become the

principal site of pilgrimage from the beginning of the century. The process of mingling and maturing, which took place in the seventeenth century, revealed a definitive legacy of the Baroque era to modern Mexico. The Virgin of Guadalupe became the Queen of Mexico who, unlike the absent and mortal King of Spain, belonged to an ever-present spiritual world. This was the cultural inheritance which the mid-nineteenth-century Liberal Reform movement struggled to combat.



Plate 4.3 Basilica of the Virgin of Solitude, Oaxaca. The sanctuary of the *Virgen de la Soledad*, particularly venerated in Oaxaca, was constructed on the site of a hermitage in 1582. The present structure in the baroque style dates from 1682. The church was consecrated in 1690. It stands between Independencia and Morelos Streets, west of the central square

(Author's photograph)

New Spain has been described as *tierra mariana*. Although *guadalupanismo* related initially to central Mexico, many other manifestations of the cult of the Virgin appeared in different localities

across Mexico, with basilicas or sanctuaries constructed around them. The Virgin of Solitude in Oaxaca, the Virgin of Ocotlán in Tlaxcala, the Virgin of Zapopan in Guadalajara, the Virgin of the Pueblito in Querétaro were just some of these powerful popular devotions. From the mid-eighteenth century, however, Guadalupean devotion increased, disseminated through the cities north of Mexico City by parish priests trained in the capital. These were the least Indian areas of New Spain.

The extraordinary depth of the cult of the Virgin in both New Spain and its Mexican successor state raises many questions. The parallel with Malintzin has been drawn: two female symbols at opposite poles – or two aspects of the same personality on the lines of the duality of the pre-Columbian gods. Commentators on Mexican collective psychology have pointed to popular surrender to the mother figure epitomised by the Virgin. Mary has become the mother who redeems the ‘patria’ handed over to Cortés by Malintzin. Almost any contemporary definition of Mexican identity leads sooner or later to *guadalupanismo*. The virginity-maternity cults explain in part the contribution of the era of the Baroque to the cultural formation of modern Mexico. *Guadalupanismo* subsequently contributed to the definition of Mexican nationalism – a powerful protection against threats from the outside.

The Exposed North and Far North

In the north-west, Yaqui resistance delayed the Hispanic advance for one hundred years after the first Spanish incursion in the 1530s. The arrival of Jesuit priests in the area in the 1610s led initially to a pacific compromise with the 30,000 Yaquis and the establishment of more than fifty mission pueblos in the Sonora river valleys. The Jesuits, however, incurred hostility by their opposition to the Indian shamans who mediated between the living and the departed souls. On the fringes of the Sierra Madre, the Ópatas became Spanish allies. Thence, the Jesuits began to move into Pima and Papago territories before reaching the edges of the Apache frontier. The Gran Apachería was a zone stretching from the Colorado River in Texas in the east to the Gila River in the west, 750 miles in breadth and 500 miles in depth, the desert core of the far north. The Apaches were linguistically one nation, although divided between the Chiricahuas in the west and the Mescaleros, Lipanes, and other groups in the east. They were surrounded, however, by hostile nations, such as the Comanches, who controlled the buffalo plains, and the New Mexico Pueblos, whose hatred of the Apaches accounted for their fortress-type dwelling places. After the Spanish had broken through the Chichimeca frontier in the 1590s, they then encountered the Apache frontier.

In the north, Indian responses to the creeping Hispanic presence were alternately violent and pacific, as differing strategies of survival were employed. Indian uprisings attempted to restore the balance on the frontiers in face of land loss and threats to autonomy and cultural identity by settler,

presidio, and mission. For the Hispanic settlers, peace was necessary in order to secure Indian labour in the fields and mines, but frequently they sought to impose this peace by violent methods. Settler bands raided into Indian territories in reprisal and for slaves and livestock. The frontiers moved constantly; conflict became savage on both sides; the ravages of uncompromising warfare conflicted with the values of mission culture. In 1616, the Tepehuanes rose against Hispanic settlers and early Jesuit missions in concert with Indian allies from the Chihuahua zone, including Tarahumara groups. Mission attempts to settle semi-nomadic Indians permanently, when they changed their abode seasonally, threatened both religion and culture. From the 1630s, the Jesuits began to establish missions among the Tarahumara. Their intention was to provide an agricultural base for their missions, which meant Indian cultivation of their lands.

A series of Tarahumara risings in western Chihuahua in 1646, 1650, 1652, 1689, and 1696–7 pushed back Hispanic penetration of the Sierra Madre and destroyed many of the Jesuit missions established there. The Tarahumara were one of those semi-nomadic peoples. They had, however, absorbed a great deal of Hispanic influence, in order to strengthen their own resistance. They specialised in ambushes and their fortified defence positions neutralised initial Spanish advantages in firearms and horses. They traded in captured livestock further northwards. The Tarahumara zone covered some 5,000 square miles between the 26th and the 30th parallels. The final revolt, which led to the destruction of seven missions and spread into Sonora and Sinaloa, left much of this zone free of Hispanic penetration for several decades.

In 1680, a major Pueblo uprising killed some 380 Hispanic settlers and 21 Franciscan missionaries. The rest of the 2,000 settlers and Christianised

Indians fled down the Río Grande to the vicinity of El Paso, where the Jesuits had founded a mission in 1659. Conflicts over labour distribution, ill-treatment of Indians, and the behaviour of corrupt officials lay at the roots of the great Pueblo insurrection. Furthermore, the Franciscans had begun an attack on Indian rituals, which continued alongside Catholic practice. In 1661, they had prohibited Indian dances, masks, and prayer feathers, and, in face of great local resentment, destroyed large quantities of masks. Even after the suppression of the uprising, Indian rituals and official Catholicism (highly coloured in any case by local practice) existed in a dual relationship. The Spanish authorities did not attempt a reconquest until 1692.

Throughout the far north and north-west, there had been since the 1680s a clear rejection of the Spanish presence, whether it took the form of landed estate, mine, *presidio*, or mission. The impact of the successful Pueblo uprising, in which *mestizos* also participated, spread into the Tarahumara lands and influenced the uprisings of 1689 and 1696–7. Most Indian uprisings defended threatened religious practices, upheld village autonomy and land usage, and sought alliances beyond the immediate group. These were not tribal rebellions but opposition alliances constructed by Indian leaders themselves. In the Pueblo and Tarahumara cases, these were often men caught between the two societies and with an ambiguous response to the dilemma of their peoples. The latter, frequently confused and divided, were themselves caught between the apparent safety of an authoritarian Jesuit culture and their shamans' promises of imminent redress.

In 1683, the Álamos silver mines were discovered in the Sonora Sierra Madre, at a time when the Hispanic population there reached some 1,300

inhabitants. The town became a major staging post for expansion into the Far North. In their last advance, between 1685 and 1700, the Jesuits founded twenty-five missions in the Pimería area, among them San Javier del Bac and San Agustín del Tucson on the Santa Cruz river – towns later transferred to the United States in 1853 as part of the Gadsden Purchase. In 1697, the Jesuits founded the mission of Nuestra Señora de Loreto in Lower California, the first of a number of tenuously held positions in the inhospitable peninsula.

The metropolitan government attempted to consolidate the Spanish position in 1687 by the establishment of a governorship in the north-eastern province of Coahuila, with its seat in Monclova, separate from Durango. By the 1690s, however, Hispanic frontier society had begun to buckle under the impact of marauding Indian bands. Resistance in the north delayed the settlement of Texas until 1716, in spite of the urgency of a Spanish presence there to contain potential French penetration westwards from Louisiana. In 1718, San Antonio de Bexar was founded. Brigadier Pedro de Rivera's military inspection of twenty-three *presidios* in 1727 resulted in a Royal Regulation in 1729 for the reorganisation of the frontier, but nothing concrete followed. Texas remained the most sparsely settled of Spain's far northern territories.

Early in the eighteenth century, nomad Indian raids worsened across the entire northern area. The Comanches had moved down from the Rocky Mountains and were pushing the Apaches across the Texas plains and into New Mexico. They combined trading at the Taos fair with bloody raids around Pecos and Galisteo. The Apaches themselves posed a repeated threat along the Ópata and Pima frontiers, in spite of the establishment of a *presidio* at Fronteras (Sonora) in 1692. A major Seri rebellion took place in

the Sonora coastal zone in 1725–6, and two rebellions in Baja California in the 1730s and 1740s effectively deprived the authorities of control of the peninsula. The situation in Sonora, however, went from bad to worse. In 1740 a large part of the Yaqui nation rose in concert with the Mayos to expel the Hispanic settlers. The rebellion covered the vast area across the Yaqui, Mayo, and Fuerte Rivers almost to the Sinaloa River. Hostility stemmed from government attempts to alter land-holding and tribute rates in the mission towns, and Jesuit retention of labour on mission land for heavy duties with no pay. The Yaquis demanded the right to sell their produce freely, carry their own weapons, and go freely to work in the mines. Effectively, the rebellion of 1740–2 destroyed the credibility of the Jesuit mission enterprise in the north-west. A further Seri insurrection took place in 1748, which had Pima and Papago support, and dragged on into the 1750s.

By 1760, there was possibly a total population of 233,600 inhabitants in the Mexican north, of whom fewer than half belonged to Indian nations. 54,000 of these Indians were in Sonora and 47,150 in Nueva Vizcaya. Halfway through the eighteenth century, the situation in the north and far north remained in disarray.

The Political Processes

The weakening of Spanish metropolitan power exposed the changing nature of relations between state and society in the Americas. The royal bureaucracy became increasingly subordinate to the interests of colonial elites. The political predominance of local oligarchies during the seventeenth century meant that the key relationship at the top levels of colonial society was between the central bureaucratic organs and the mercantile-financial élite. The viceregal office and the *audiencia* increasingly harmonised with the interests of the resident elite. Viceregal authority could even seem precarious at times, as in 1624 and 1692, when the viceregal palace was attacked during city riots. Political control was temporarily lost through disputes between institutions and personalities at the highest level.

The brief metropolitan attempt to assert predominance during the 1640s led to far-reaching political tensions. At the centre of these conflicts was the Bishop of Puebla, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza (1600–59), protégé of Philip IV's principal minister, the Count-Duke of Olivares (1587–1645). Olivares's policies increased fiscal pressure both in Spain and the Empire and provoked opposition or non-compliance. The Union of Arms, imposed in 1624, was designed to maximise fiscal contributions from all areas of the monarchy towards the maintenance of Spain as an imperial power. The struggle between Spain and the United Provinces of the Netherlands, interrupted in 1598, renewed in 1621, led in the following decades to Dutch attacks on Spanish shipping and the American dominions. The cost of

warfare provided a cause of the rebellions of Catalonia and Portugal in 1640, precisely the time Palafox arrived in New Spain. The fall of Olivares in 1643, however, left Palafox vulnerable. He concentrated on Puebla diocesan affairs and made three separate visitations of groups of parishes between 1643 and 1646, in order to discover for himself the condition of religion and the state of the villages. A proponent of the supremacy of the secular clergy over the religious, Palafox secularized a large number of parishes in Puebla, which further exposed the indigenous population to outside influences and facilitated voluntary labour on the lands of nearby *haciendas*, growing in economic significance at the time. Palafox criticized the regular clergy for monopolising the richest parishes in the diocese, while members of the secular clergy remained without secure positions. His attack on the position of the Jesuits, the predominant religious and cultural influence in seventeenth-century New Spain, ultimately led to his own downfall. The Jesuits had become the wealthiest landowners in the viceroyalty, with properties nominally valued at up to 4 million pesos. Palafox went so far as to question the very existence of the Society. These conflicts and his attempt to tighten imperial control as Visitor-General of New Spain from 1640 and later as Viceroy in 1642 brought about the most intense conflicts of the century. The resulting destabilization of New Spain's political system ultimately led to Palafox's recall in 1649.

The Spanish Crown's desperate search for funds explained the extension of sales of office, initiated under Philip II, to positions in the *audiencias*. In such a way, Americans gained access to the senior magistracy and gradually established their hegemony in full contravention of the Laws of the Indies, which were to be codified in 1680–81. At the same time, several prominent Spanish-born magistrates married and owned

property within the territory in which they exercised jurisdiction, again contrary to the spirit of the Laws. The *audiencia*, originally the bastion of Castilian absolutism, gradually became an organ which expressed the views of the resident interest-groups, whether of Spanish or American provenance. The viceregal court in Mexico City similarly reflected such interests.

As long as the metropolitan government remained weak, Mexico City rather than Madrid dominated New Spain in practice. This is not to imply that Spain had lost control of its overseas territories. The authority of the crown was nowhere significantly challenged; the close relationship between Church and state guaranteed the religious sanction behind royal authority; repeated threats to Spanish American territories from rival powers made the peninsular connection vital. The prevailing reality, however, was that resident Spaniards and Americans were left to themselves as to how they coped with their problems. The Spanish colonial system, modified by American realities, remained the means of legitimizing the position of the predominant interest-groups within New Spain. A complex series of linkages and dependencies, which operated in both lay and ecclesiastical contexts, spread downwards from the levels of power and wealth to the poorer reaches of society.



Plate 4.4 The House of Tiles, Mexico City. This house had been the residence of the influential Condes del Valle de Orizaba and dated from 1793. The Puebla-style blue and white tiles covering the exterior were added later. The Spanish Crown bestowed this title on the entailed estate-owning family in 1627. The family intermarried and had business dealings with other noble families. The house is situated in Madero Street (formerly San Francisco Street), a prized location in the city centre, where many such families built their elegant urban residences. The Sanborn brothers acquired the building in 1917, enabling them to extend their restaurant and adjacent store

(Photograph by M. A. Anipkin, 2015)

Although these tendencies continued into the 1760s, the metropolitan government slowly began the laborious process of reforming governmental structures and practices both in Spain and in the Empire. This had already started during the 1690s, as Spain emerged from the worst decade of its experience as a power. The establishment of the junior branch of the French Bourbon dynasty on the Spanish throne after the War of the Spanish

Succession (1700–15) reinforced the policy of reform. Philip V (1700–46) tentatively sought to establish the French-style Intendant system in the peninsula in 1718 but this centralised administrative structure was not consolidated until after 1739. Metropolitan policy sought to make Spain a more effective colonial authority by a series of administrative and commercial reforms which provided the basis for later measures during the reign of Charles III (1759–88). The first attempts to rationalize the taxation of American trade were made in 1720, and in 1742 licensed ships were authorized to trade to Peru by way of the Atlantic route. The Jalapa trade fairs were established in New Spain in 1727, in an attempt to encourage wider distribution of transatlantic produce.

Within New Spain, the viceregal government initiated a series of measures which would have later significance. In the first place, the royal authorities in 1733 took over the direct administration of the Royal Mint, with the object of centralizing the production of gold and silver coinage. This policy began a long process of terminating private and corporate leases of royal functions and revenues. During the 1740s, Viceroy Revillagigedo the Elder (1745–54) called in the lease of the *alcabala* (sales-tax) for Mexico City and its immediate zone administered by the Consulado. Revillagigedo's measure illustrated the Bourbon government's intention to regain control of the administration of royal revenues and thereby increase receipts. The clear implication was that state organs within the empire would be expanded, in order to make metropolitan authority more effective. The style of government which accompanied these policies announced a change in metropolitan Spain's thinking on the nature and purpose of empire. Although rarely consistent in approach and application, Bourbon

policies began to alter the balance of relationships between Spain and the Indies, and within the American dominions themselves.

Destabilization and Fragmentation, 1770–1867



During this period a relatively prosperous society organized as the Spanish colonial Viceroyalty of New Spain became transformed into a weak and divided Mexican Republic. How this process took place and what it implied continues to provoke disagreement in the historical literature. Until 1821, New Spain formed part of a wider Spanish imperial entity. The metropole gave priority to the interests of the Empire as a whole, rather than to any specific part of it. Spanish government support for the Mexican mining industry, while it benefited Mexican investors in the short term, was designed to promote not Mexican but imperial interests. The high stakes involved in the mining industry helped to explain both government and investor neglect of the cereal sector, vulnerable at a time of population recovery.

Spain itself also formed part of the imperial system, although by the 1780s and 1790s it became clear that the metropole did not have sufficient resources to sustain the imperial burden for much longer, in the face of

increasing international competition. The disintegration of the Spanish financial system under the pressure of warfare in the 1790s and 1800s increased metropolitan pressure on the Mexican Treasury General. After 1796, Spain effectively depended more and more on Mexican subsidies to sustain its faltering position. The political collapse of Bourbon Spain in 1808 began the process of American reorganization which finally culminated in the total collapse of the empire in mainland America during the 1820s.

While the process of Independence certainly formed the climactic event of the period, it represented, nevertheless, part of an ongoing transformation from a European colonial territory to an internally divided sovereign state existing precariously in a threatening outside world. Although Independence undoubtedly represented a break in political terms, much continuity existed between the Bourbon reforms of the years 1760–95, and the Liberal Reform movement which struggled to hold power in the period 1855–67.

In terms of territory claimed, New Spain predominated on the North American subcontinent in the centuries before 1800. By contrast, Mexico between 1836 and 1853 was stripped of half the territory inherited from the colonial viceroyalty by an expansionist United States, and was subjected to the armed intervention of France, then regarded as Europe's principal military power, between 1862 and 1867. Some historians, faced with this reversal of fortunes, have referred to the 'decline of Mexico' during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century. If we are to speak of decline, then, it should be understood as relative to the rise of the United States as a continental power in the period from 1800 to 1870.

The Viceroyalty of New Spain collapsed as a viable political entity during the period 1795–1821. However, in the period from 1821 to 1867 Mexicans were largely unsuccessful at working out durable alternative structures. The historiography of those years is still struggling with the explanations for that. In this book, 1867 is regarded as a terminal date because it signified the effective end of the foreign threats of dismemberment or domination, and signalled to the outside world the survival of an independent, Mexican sovereign state. Weakened though it was, this state was conscious of its identity and its ability to survive in a dangerous world by virtue of its own inner strengths. The failure of the French Intervention, and the disintegration of the Mexican Second Empire, which it had been designed to promote, demonstrated the country's success in staving off the threat of re-imposed subordination to a European metropolis. This success came in the aftermath of the traumatic military defeat by the United States in 1846–8. Internal political struggles, however, continued unabated during both the wars against the United States and the French Intervention. The restoration of the Republic in 1867 did not signify their termination but, on the contrary, their intensification.



Plate 5.1 The Viceroyalty of New Spain in 1811. Detail from the ‘Carte du Mexique et des pays limitrophes situés au nord et à l'est,’ the large map attached to the first volume Alexander von Humboldt's *Essai politique sur le royaume de la Nouvelle Espagne*, 5 vols (Paris 1811). This section shows central Mexico, with the Intendancy boundaries established after 1786

Part One: The Climax and Collapse of New Spain, 1770–1821

An Expanding Economy or Distorted Development?

Population recovery and economic growth explained the vibrancy and growing wealth of eighteenth-century New Spain. Mexican silver production increased from 12 million pesos by 1762 to 27 million pesos by 1804. In reality, however, the eighteenth-century mining boom was a phenomenon of earlier rather than later decades. The metropolitan government assisted mine operators by halving the price of mercury and gunpowder between 1776 and 1801, freeing mining and refining equipment from sales tax, and granting tax privileges in the case of high-risk investments. This ostensible expansion and these seemingly enlightened measures were, however, fraught with complications. The growth of the mining sector responded not just to government policies but, more especially, to demand in the international economy. Metropolitan Spain sought to take advantage of the recovery of the Mexican mining industry during the eighteenth century, in order to boost its revenues. As always, its motives were primarily fiscal, rather than any general concern with the balance of the economy. Mexican economic performance was measured in Madrid in terms of its capacity to yield revenue through increased or more efficient taxation. These imperial considerations lay at the heart of the 'Bourbon reforms' and Spanish Enlightened Despotism.

In the 1790s, Mexico City had the largest Mint in the world. Royal revenues rose from 3 million pesos in 1712 to 20 million pesos during the 1790s. Between 1770 and 1820, Mexico exported between 500 million and 600 million pesos by public and private accounts: this represented a substantial proportion of silver output. Consequently, the world's greatest silver producer repeatedly experienced a shortage of circulating medium.

This became a major issue by the 1800s. After 1792, currency export finally exceeded registered coined silver. In 1802–5 alone, New Spain exported 96.7 million pesos, the equivalent of all the silver minted since 1799. Most of this was on the public account, which pointed to the depressing impact of the Royal Treasury on the economy as a whole. By the end of the century, the mining industry depended heavily on government support and on diverting resources from elsewhere in the economy.

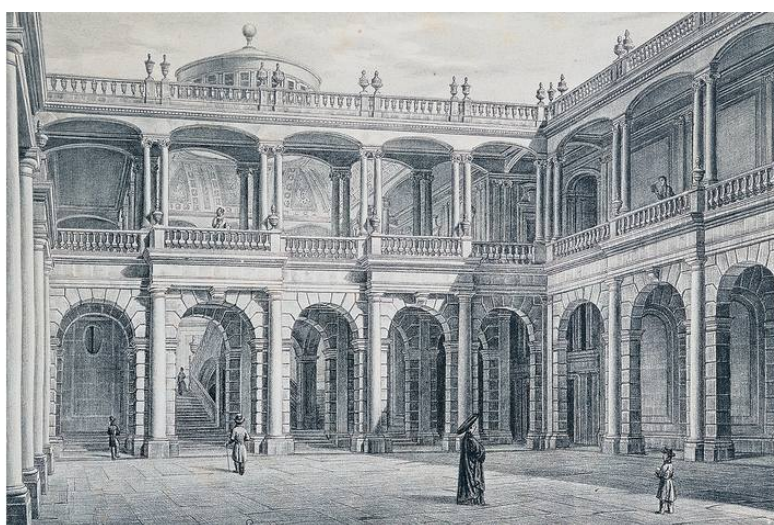


Plate 5.2 The Interior of the Mining College, Mexico City. This image reproduces the lithograph of the patio made in 1841. The building of the Palacio de Minería from 1797 to 1813, under the original direction of Manuel Tolsá, represented the climax of New Spain's focus on mining technology. It is located in the Calle Tacuba. The Neo-Classical style represented an outstanding expression of the Mexican Enlightenment. Its first director Fausto de Elhuyar, was one of the leading mining specialists of his time

(By kind permission of the Roberto Mayer Collection: photo by
Adrián Bodek)

At the same time, New Spain's agricultural base remained precariously weak in terms of resources allocated to it and because of its continued exposure to abrupt meteorological changes. The contradictions in New Spain's economy and social system ultimately contributed to deepening crisis during the last decades of the century. The imprecise relationship between economic, social, cultural, and political elements in the collapse of Spanish colonial rule in New Spain in the period between 1800 and 1821 accounts for the diverging interpretations of the broader period covered in this chapter.

Social and Economic Contrasts in Late Colonial New Spain

A general picture of late colonial New Spain has emerged from recent research which shows a prosperous society increasingly undermined by sharp divisions of wealth and characterised by regional disparities. At the same time, the expansion of Spanish entrepreneurial influence throughout New Spain clashed with traditional popular perceptions of how social relations should be managed. Ethnic tensions and racist disdain on the part of Spaniards exacerbated these economic and cultural divergencies. Eric Van Young, for instance, has put forward the notion of cities with striking Baroque architecture but beggars on the streets and bandits in the outskirts. At the same time, the educated élite sought to disseminate the ideas of the Enlightenment, while peasant society defended its traditional way of life. Most historians agree that the economy was heading for crisis by the end of the century. Social tensions resulting in part from deteriorating living standards at a time of static wages and population growth assumed alarming proportions in specific areas of the country.

A small circle of businessmen dominated the principal economic activities of eighteenth-century New Spain. Their personal wealth, often ostentatiously displayed, distinguished them from the other levels of colonial society. Many of the leading entrepreneurial figures were of Spanish peninsular origin, although their principal economic interests and family connections were within New Spain. The Andalusian, Pedro Romero de Terreros, for example, who became Conde de Regla in 1768, made his money in silver mining at Real del Monte, near Pachuca, from 1742. Labour relations at Regla's mines remained notoriously conflictive. His

attempts in 1766–7 to reduce labour costs by removing the workers' traditional entitlement to a share of the ore, known as the *partido*, at the end of each shift provoked a major strike. Doris Ladd has described this as the conflict of two value systems. The crown's arbitrator, Francisco de Gamboa, the leading American political figure in the Audiencia of Mexico and an authority on mining legislation, upheld worker grievances. For his part, Viceroy Antonio María de Bucareli (1771–9) upheld the *partido*. Although initially obliged to back down, Regla, along with other silver-operators, subsequently renewed his efforts to cut labour costs in the mining industry. In consequence, labour relations in the mining zones remained volatile for the remainder of the colonial period. Regla held municipal office in Querétaro from the 1740s, purchased five appropriated Jesuit haciendas for just over a million pesos, in order to supply Mexico City with pulque, and married into the Mexican titled nobility.

Basque immigrants played the principal role in the rehabilitation of the Zacatecas mines during the 1780s and 1790s. Among a handful of mine operators who predominated in that zone were the Fagoaga brothers. Colonel Francisco Manuel Fagoaga, a native of Mexico City, made his money in the Zacatecas mines, and became Marqués del Apartado in 1771. Resident in Mexico City, the Fagoaga brothers invested large amounts of capital in the 1780s to little avail in the flooded Pabellón mines at Sombrerete. In 1792, they secured temporary relief from the Royal Fifth tax, in order to assist the recovery of production there. Within one year, however, the mine produced a bonanza, which led the viceregal government to question the wisdom of the tax concessions. By reinvesting the proceeds in further enterprises in Fresnillo and Zacatecas itself, the Fagoagas commanded by 1805 liquid assets of more than three and a half million

pesos. Each of the two brothers founded an extensive dynasty which resulted in marriage connections with the Condes de Santiago, Torre de Cosío, and Alacaraz. Francisco Manuel married into the Villaurrutia family in 1772. His wife was the sister of Jacobo and Antonio de Villaurrutia, magistrates respectively of the Audiencias of Mexico City and Guadalajara. The former played a leading role in the autonomy movement of 1808 in the capital. Francisco Manuel's sons and nephews were to play a significant role during the political changes of the 1810s. The second Marqués, for instance, became a Mexican substitute deputy in the Spanish Cortes in 1813–14 and attended the Madrid Cortes of 1821.

In Coahuila, by 1805 the Sánchez Navarro family controlled a total of 671,438 acres of sheep-raising land. In contrast to the Aguayos, whose entire estate they purchased in 1840, the family administered its properties directly. Their business associate in Mexico City was the Spanish merchant Gabriel de Yermo, a leading member of the Consulado, who placed their produce on the market. Yermo would become the central figure in the peninsular coup d'état of September 1808 designed to abort the drift towards autonomy. By 1815, the estimated value of the Sánchez Navarro's estates reached 1,172,383 pesos.

The display of wealth at the top levels of society contrasted with living conditions for the majority of the population. New Spain's agriculture remained subject to abrupt subsistence crises, which threatened popular livelihood. Meteorological fluctuation and inadequate supply resulted in dearth. The infrastructure failed for the most part to cope with the strain placed on it. Subsistence crises, furthermore, affected the entire economy. Rises in cereal prices in 1713–14, 1749–50, 1785–6, and 1808–9 were passed on to all other foodstuffs. The Guanajuato mining zone, for instance,

needed huge quantities of maize to feed the 14,000 mules used in the amalgamation of ore and the refining process. In both 1785–6 and 1808–9, food shortages in the mining districts and in the Bajío in general proved to be far more serious than in the central valleys. The impact of dearth, however, differed from locality to locality, depending on types of soil and efficiency of relief. The Mexican central valleys and the central highlands of Michoacán had access to lower-altitude supplies. Mining zones, however, remained too far away. San Luis Potosí, for instance, was hit disastrously in 1785–6, but rapidly recovered, only to face further shortages in 1788 and 1789. Abundance followed in 1791–2. In 1808–9, drought hit the main cattle zones at a time of escalating maize prices. In San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas, the maize price stood at 40 reales, in contrast to the Mexico City price of 30 reales. The calamities of 1785–6 recurred throughout the Bajío, though the central zone of Guadalajara was less affected in 1809 and 1810 than earlier. The sugar-producing zone of the present-day State of Morelos also escaped the worst impact of food shortages in 1809–10. As in 1785–6, the mining areas felt the severest effects of dearth, especially because in 1809–10 a shortage of mercury exacerbated the problem.

The social and political impact of dearth is open to debate. No automatic connection existed between food shortages and insurrection. The subsistence crisis of 1785–6 was more severe than the crisis of 1808–9, which preceded the outbreak of insurrection in 1810. Yet, no uprising accompanied or followed the former. Dislocation, however, could provide conditions in which insurgency flourished. The overriding difference between the dearths of 1785–6 and 1809–10 was that the latter formed part of a multidimensional crisis. This involved both long- and short-term

factors and a crisis at imperial level with the collapse of the Spanish Bourbon monarchy in 1808 and the Peninsular War of 1808–14.

Metropolitan Spain and Imperial Reorganization

As long as this imperial superstructure survived, the interests of Mexico itself could not be given priority. On the contrary, Mexican resources and interests were subordinated to imperial strategies. As a result, resources which might have been put towards the defense and settlement of the far north were diverted out of the country into the imperial system as a whole. Furthermore, Spain's financial needs in time of war pressed heavily upon its rich American dependency. These pressures increased from the mid-1760s to the 1810s, a period of deepening contradictions in New Spain's society and economy. The strength of New Spain's silver currency bolstered Imperial Spain's international position, which could not be sustained solely from peninsular resources.

The British threat in the Caribbean and the Philippines in 1761–3 stimulated a renewal of the Bourbon reform measures begun under Philip V earlier in the century. Defense considerations accompanied policies designed to tighten the political and commercial relationship of metropolis and empire. The imperial government in Madrid identified New Spain as one of its perilously exposed dominions. Accordingly, a military mission under Juan de Villalba arrived there in 1764 in an attempt to raise a colonial militia force. Perennially beset by financial difficulties, imperial Spain could not afford to pay for a professional army to be sent to Mexico or raised there, but sought, instead, to rely on the resources of its richest dependency. Madrid, for instance, refused to accept a 1776 proposal for an army of 13,000 regular soldiers at the cost of 1.3 million pesos. Regular troops were normally paid out of general revenues: instead, the

metropolitan government intended to charge the municipal councils of New Spain for the cost of raising local militias.

Fiscal preoccupations remained at the heart of late Bourbon colonial policy. New Spain, the richest dependency, increasingly felt the pressure of taxation. The official visitation by José de Gálvez (1720–87) in 1765–71 intensified fiscal pressures. Even so, the *visita* formed part of a broader range of measures. In 1733, for instance, the crown established its monopoly of coinage, and in 1774, Bucareli completed the process of re-establishing royal control over the collection of the sales tax. Gálvez himself had little interest in Mexican agriculture or industry, since his prime concern was to increase royal revenues and expand the export sector. Both objectives entailed the strengthening and expansion of the viceregal bureaucracy. At the governmental level, Viceroy Revillagigedo the Younger (1789–94) in 1790 could count on five secretarial departments, in contrast to the two before 1756, with a staff of thirty.

Gálvez's recommendation of 1768 for the establishment of new authorities at the provincial level throughout the empire only took effect in 1776, when he became Minister of the Indies. The Intendant system was originally intended to be a method of tightening imperial unity. Gálvez had recommended the supersession of the viceregal office (and thereby the removal of the Mexican court) in favour of direct control from Madrid through the Intendants. Traditionalist interests in both Madrid and Mexico City managed to subvert such a radical measure. The result proved to be a compromise, the viceroy still strong enough to water down those aspects of the reform which conflicted with his position. Enlightened Despotism rapidly crumbled in the face of Mexican realities. Although Bucareli had delayed the establishment of Intendancies on financial grounds and Viceroy

Manuel Antonio Flórez (1787–9) opposed them outright, Revillagigedo gave the new administrative structure his full support. The main success of the Intendant system lay in the tax-raising capacity of the administrative reorganization. The principal failure lay at the district level, where the new subdelegate was to have replaced the financial and commercial networks of the *alcaldes mayores* and *corregidores*. Crown inability to pay its new district commissioners a satisfactory salary led to the return of many of the traditional abuses. By 1795, the viceroy had recovered full control over financial administration. Finally, political division in Madrid aborted last attempts to overhaul the Intendant system in 1803.

In the aftermath of Spanish participation in the War of American Independence (1776–83) on the side of the Anglo-American colonists in alliance with France, the metropolitan government took the decision in 1788 to finance a militia force of 11,000 troops supplemented by 6,000 regular soldiers (in peacetime) at the cost of 1.5 million pesos. During the 1790s, however, the viceregal government was divided over how best to respond to the defense issue. Revillagigedo argued that the Mexican Treasury could sustain the cost of a regular army, since its revenues had doubled between 1769 and 1789. A strong proponent of centralized reforms designed to tighten imperial control, Revillagigedo disliked the idea of relying on colonial militiamen as the principal line of defense. By 1792, the cost of regular and provincial militia forces rose to 2.8 million pesos. Viceroy Branciforte (1794–7), by contrast, pushed forward the formation of provincial militias. Imperial considerations, furthermore, placed a heavy strain on Mexican resources. The metropolitan government transferred three infantry regiments from New Spain for the defense of Louisiana, acquired from France in 1763, Cuba, and Santo Domingo. The Mexican Treasury

was at the same time required to pay 3 million pesos annually in government subsidies to these and other outlying Caribbean positions. Branciforte, for his part, conscious of the cost of Spanish participation in the armed struggle against Revolutionary France (1793–5), sent 14 million pesos from the Mexican revenues to Spain in 1794–5.

Imperial costs meant that there was never enough money to maintain a sufficiently strong army within New Spain. Until 1795, the crown gave priority to the defense of the Caribbean, where the British threat seemed the greatest. During the war of 1796–1808, when Spain was in alliance with Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, the possibility of a British attack on New Spain appeared possible. Accordingly, extra funds had to be found to pay for an emergency cantonment of forces in the hinterland of Veracruz in 1797–8. The high cost at 1.5 million pesos led to disbandment within fifteen months. A subsequent cantonment in 1806–8 proved even more expensive and highly controversial in view of the viceroy's decision to abandon the defense of the port itself.

The wars of 1796–1808, however, finally broke the colonial fiscal system, which relied increasingly on extraordinary revenues to cover expenditure. Merchant and mining corporations provided a large measure of this subsidy, whether forced or voluntary. The immediate political consequence meant that the viceregal government would have to reach accommodation with precisely those privileged bodies which had been adversely affected by the Bourbon reforms. This process of financial collapse was a major – and largely overlooked – contributory factor to the disintegration of Spanish rule in Mexico, a process further accelerated by the armed conflicts of the 1810s. The Royal Treasury debt had stood at 13.9 million pesos in 1791, but under the impact of war and civil conflict debt

increased to 37.5 million pesos in 1815. The breakdown of a once viable system of government finance well before the impact of the insurrection of 1810 ensured that Independent Mexico would inherit an exhausted treasury and a mountain of internal debt.



Map 5.1 The Viceroyalty of New Spain in 1810

Merchants, Markets, and Industries

Merchants who handled the import trade during peacetime moved into manufacturing during wartime. Always involved in providing investment in the textile sector, as in mining as well, merchant interests in the domestic market expanded with the interruption of European imports. Importers knew the market and could gear production towards demand. In the case of the Puebla cotton-textile industry, they began to extend their investments into the Gulf zone of raw-material supply. By the end of the eighteenth century, a small group of Puebla wholesalers came to monopolize the cotton supply to dealers and weavers in the city and its adjacent producing areas through the provision of credit to the producing communities. Merchant-financiers used the royal district administrators as their intermediaries. Arrangements with Gulf coast muleteers brought the raw cotton up to Puebla.

During the 1790s and early 1800s, the textile crafts of Puebla reached their peak. In the city alone, the textile industries employed more than 20 per cent of the population. Merchants in the city advanced credit to artisans, who delivered the finished product back to them for distribution. Although the small group of investor-distributors benefited greatly from these conditions, the Mexican textile industry as a whole remained technologically retarded at a time of far-reaching transformation in the processes of production in north-west Europe. Although the metropolitan authorities disliked the proliferation of colonial manufacturing, they were in no position to prevent it. Nevertheless, royal legislation in 1767, 1794, and

1802 provided for duty-free cotton export to the peninsula, in the hope of diverting raw material from New Spain's industries into those of Catalonia.

Within New Spain itself, Puebla was overtaken after 1803 by Guadalajara as the principal cotton-textile producer in terms of value. Guadalajara could count on easy access to raw-material supplies in the Colima coastal zone. The textile boom began there after 1765. Before the 1770s, most textiles had been imported into the centre-north-west from Europe or from the producing areas in the Bajío. By the 1800s, most were locally produced as a result of a type of regional import-substitution. Commercial capital, rather than technological change, increased artisan production, although the workshops remained in the hands of self-employed producers working with their own equipment. Many artisans operated basic looms in their own homes beyond the surveillance of the declining guilds. The Guadalajara zone was no less vulnerable to European competition than Puebla, as could be seen when British textiles began to enter the region through the Pacific port of San Blas by way of Jamaica and the Isthmus of Panama during the 1810s. This left the city's textile artisans, who formed the largest occupational group, in a precarious position after Independence in 1821.

Up to thirty-nine *obrajes* continued to function in New Spain at the end of the eighteenth century, with an annual production value of 648,000 pesos. The opening of the neutral trade in 1797–9 and again after 1805, as an extemporary government measure designed to circumvent the British naval blockade, adversely affected New Spain's industries by letting in manufactures produced by more technologically advanced societies. After 1805, Puebla's cotton-textile industry ceased to expand. The number of distributors trading in Spanish cloth fell from thirty-four to nine between

1807 and 1820. Several Veracruz merchants, such as Pablo Escandón and Estéban de Antuñano, transferred their business interests to Puebla in an attempt to diversify into the province's textile manufacture during the difficult decades of the 1810s and 1820s. The problem, however, still remained predominantly technological.

The Continuing Problems of the North and Far North

Bourbon measures sought to address the inherited problems of the far north and north. Lack of available resources, continued fiscal stringency, and political division in both Madrid and Mexico City, however, combined to frustrate a new departure in the reorganization of these exposed territories. Decisions taken – or the lack of them – during the late colonial period ultimately contributed to the final loss of the Far North by the Mexican Republic between 1836 and 1853.

Spain established no new political entity there separated from the viceregal government in Mexico City, which could attempt to end the marginalization of the north and far north. Like the Intendant system, the introduction of the Commandancy General of the Northern Provinces was an incomplete reform.

The metropolitan government in 1765 appointed the Marqués de Rubí, a senior army officer, to inspect the condition of the twenty *presidios*. He proceeded in the following year from Zacatecas northwards through Durango and Chihuahua to El Paso and thence up the Río Grande to Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Rubí was appalled at the lack of any coordinated defense structure and the exploitation of the settler and *presidio* population. He reported low soldier morale. Rubí advocated the concentration of the *presidios* into fifteen positions established on a defensive line from the Gulf of California to the Gulf of Mexico, though including Santa Fe. In response, the crown issued a Regulation on Frontier *Presidios* in 1772. Even so, Navajo and Comanche activity in New Mexico and Apache raids deep into Chihuahua and Coahuila kept the frontier

unstable throughout the 1770s. Bucareli, worried at the high cost of frontier defense, advocated concentration on the inner line of Nueva Vizcaya and Coahuila. Even so, the authorities had failed to prevent the Apache–Tarahumara alliance of 1775–6 and had been unable to dislodge their strongholds.

In the meantime, Gálvez led the largest expedition into Sonora since the sixteenth century, with the object of re-establishing full Spanish control in face of renewed Seri and Pima hostilities. His *visita* also sought to establish an effective presence for the first time in Upper California in response to British and Russian advances on the northern Pacific coast.

Gálvez proposed a radical reorganization of the administration of the northern provinces, which the Crown approved in 1769, through the establishment of a Commandancy General directly responsible to the King. Division within the metropolitan government and the opposition of Bucareli in Mexico City delayed implementation until 1776, when Charles III appointed Gálvez Minister of the Indies. Teodoro de Croix (1730–91), nephew of a former viceroy and a distinguished army officer who had begun his career in the Walloon Guard, became the first Commandant General of the Interior Provinces in that same year. From the outset, the relationship of the new structure to the viceregal government was ambiguous, especially as Bucareli opposed both the expense and the diminution of the viceregal office. The *Comandante General de las Provincias Internas* exercised jurisdiction over Sonora, Sinaloa, Nueva Vizcaya, Coahuila, Texas, New Mexico, the Californias, and later Nuevo León and Nuevo Santander. However, his territory remained subject to the Audiencia of Guadalajara in judicial matters. Pressure for the establishment of a third *audiencia*, for instance in Chihuahua, seat of the *Comandante*

General from 1792, did not have the desired result. Croix, in any case, recommended Gálvez in 1778 to divide the *Provincias Internas* into two separate jurisdictions. Nothing, however, was done, and for ten years the *Comandancia General* remained undivided and largely beyond viceregal control.

Croix faced the problem of how to equip an effective defense force in the north at a time of intensified activity by Seris, Pimas, Ópatas, Yaquis, Mayos, and Apaches across the entire frontier zone, with heavy loss of livestock. The colonial authorities, however, broke off offensive action in July 1779, because of the imminence of Spanish entry into the War of American Independence. Once again, the imperial position of European Spain took precedence over the internal situation within New Spain. At that point, however, an uprising by the Yumas, angered at the Spanish military colony's interference with their agricultural system at the confluence of the Colorado and Gila Rivers, expelled all missionaries, settlers, and soldiers in 1780–1. As the Yumas were never reconquered, the land route between Sonora and the Californias remained interrupted for the duration of the colonial period. Croix's successor, Jacobo Ugarte y Loyola (1786–90), a veteran of the European wars of 1740–63 and previously Governor of Sonora and Coahuila, struggled with the problem of the Apaches. Ultimately the resolution of New Spain's frontier problem depended upon either defeat of the Apache groups raiding into Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Sonora, or some type of working arrangement with them. Spanish offensives in 1784–5 had also proved unsuccessful. Ugarte first sought alliances with the Comanche and Navajo enemies of the Apaches, made peace with the Chiricahuas and Lipanes in Sonora and Nueva Vizcaya, and then campaigned against the Gileños who, with their Pima and Papago

allies, had attacked the Tucson *presidio* in 1784. Between 1790 and 1810, the peace strategy proved relatively successful.

Indian resistance in the north and Far North posed a far greater problem to the Spanish colonial administration than interloping by rival European Powers, despite temporary loss of the Floridas to Great Britain between 1763 and 1783. Spain, however, compounded this problem by maintaining only a weak political organization in the northern provinces and keeping commercial life dependent on Veracruz and Mexico City, in spite of the general policy of trade liberalization within the Empire. The viceregal authorities in Mexico City, for their part, remained determined to prevent the formation of any separate authority for the entire northern zone. They opposed strengthening the woefully inadequate 3,000-man force which was supposed to defend the entire frontier. Finally, Viceroy Flórez secured royal authorization in 1787 not only for the creation of two distinct *Comandancias*, one for the eastern and one for the western provinces, but that both should be directly responsible to the viceregal government. In 1793, though, the crown changed its mind and ordered the reunion of the two sections. They remained united until the Cádiz Cortes in 1813 revived the earlier policy of division. The outbreak of insurrection within central Mexico in 1810, however, forced the authorities to divert manpower and resources away from the north at a crucial stage. As a result, peace disintegrated throughout the northern territories.

Religious Crisis and Popular Perceptions

The religious crisis within New Spain operated on several levels: the perception that the Spanish metropolitan government and its local agents had departed from traditional practices sharpened resentments across the social spectrum. Gruzinski presents the view of a 'Baroque Church' superseded by a 'Church of the Enlightenment', imposed by the largely Spanish episcopate appointed by the Crown.

The religious question polarized opinion and divided loyalties. To some extent, the religious crisis represented a Mexican expression of the general crisis within the Roman Catholic Church during the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries under the impact of Enlightenment, Revolution, and early Liberalism. In New Spain, the combination of social and cultural factors enabled a large-scale popular mobilization to take place for the first time. The insurrection of 1810 was led by Father Miguel Hidalgo (1753–1811), parish priest of Dolores in the dynamic and densely populated province of Guanajuato. Its extent and intensity took the viceregal authorities by surprise.



Plate 5.3 Portrait of Father Miguel Hidalgo (1753–1811). The portrait by Antonio Serrano, possibly from the 1830s, portrays Hidalgo as a reflective leader wearing a sash of office. In this image of the priest and leader of the insurrection of 1810, there is a picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe on the wall behind him. The painting by Joaquín Ramírez (c. 1865) in Gallery of Insurgents in the National Palace presents a different image of potential statesman and founder of the Republic, although Hidalgo was neither. The twentieth-century muralists saw him as an avenging revolutionary. José Clemente Orozco, for example, portrayed him in the 1930s holding a firebrand in the mural of violent conflict, which he painted, covering the stairway of the Government Palace in Guadalajara. Juan O'Gorman (1905–82) portrayed Hidalgo in 1960–61 as

a nationalist revolutionary in his 'Retablo de la Independencia' in Chapultepec Castle, Mexico City

(Photo by DeAgostini. Getty Images)

The change of dynasty in 1700 had led to increased state pressure on the revenues and jurisdiction of the Church. A temporary rupture between the Spanish Crown and the Holy See, followed by the Concordats of 1737 and 1753, reflected state perceptions of superiority over the ecclesiastical power. This 'regalism' rose to a climax in the years 1765–1808, when intensified governmental pressure led to the reduction of ecclesiastical immunities and the absorption of Church revenues and properties. Archbishop Francisco Lorenzana (1766–72) and Bishop Francisco Fabián y Fuero of Puebla (1765–73) were the principal exponents of late Bourbon regalism. At the same time, the ideas of the Enlightenment began to enter New Spain. They were not necessarily heterodox, still less anti-Christian, but from mid-century they did lead to criticism of traditional educational methods and curricula. Accordingly, the clergy became divided into 'modernizers' and 'traditionalists'. Although not subversive, the new ideas increased state pressures on the institutional Church.

The expulsion of the Jesuits – the majority of the 500 were Mexicans – in 1767 stirred up a widespread opposition in New Spain which cut across social distinctions. The Jesuits had been the principal teachers in colleges attended by sons of the creole élite, confessors in nunneries, and promoters of lay Marian brotherhoods and the cult of Guadalupe. The expulsion had serious moral consequences, because it was imposed upon creole society in New Spain by the Spanish colonial authorities. A deepening division opened between the peninsular hierarchy and the popular church. The

former remained under the Royal Patronage, while the latter had already seen the parting of the ways.

The Caroline bishops campaigned against popular religious manifestations and cults. Their attacks on 'superstition' and 'fanaticism' widened the gap between the colonial government and ordinary people. Although most of this criticism focused on processions, pilgrimages, cults of the saints and the Virgin, and the centrality of local confraternity practices in Indian villages, a number of millenarian movements revealed the depth of popular unease. The religious dimension, striking deep roots within New Spain's popular culture, extended grievances far beyond the usual disputes over taxation, recruitment, grazing and water rights, land boundaries, or wage levels.

Religious discontent combined with potential clerical leadership to focus popular energies in a struggle against the colonial order. Most of the 4,229 members of the secular clergy in the viceroyalty lived in poverty. A disgruntled lower clergy not only found their prospects of advancement blocked by peninsular dominance of the Church in Mexico but also their material circumstances adversely affected by Bourbon fiscal measures. The diocese of Michoacán proved to be a fertile ground for clerical dissidence. Manuel Abad y Queipo (1751–1825), Bishop-elect at the time of the insurrection of 1810, had warned of the potential for revolution in his opposition to metropolitan reduction of ecclesiastical immunities in 1799. He warned that, even though the clergy enjoyed this special corporate status, 80 per cent of those in his diocese lived in poverty. In Abad y Queipo's view, any removal of corporate status threatened to loosen the ties of loyalty felt by the clergy, who exercised a great influence on the hearts and minds of lower-class people, to the colonial régime. Metropolitan

government policy, however, tended to pay little attention to the social role of the lower clergy within the American territories during the late Bourbon period. When rebellion came, it revealed the extent to which large components of the population had implicitly or explicitly broken with the colonial régime and the Spanish episcopate which formed an essential part of it. Those American clerics who took part in the insurrection found themselves caught up in a movement of profound dimensions which they could scarcely control.

Deepening Crises at Many Levels

In New Spain's most dynamic regions a deepening sense of vulnerability characterised lower-class life by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The immediate origins of the insurrection of 1810 lay in the particular conditions of the Bajío and the central zone of Guadalajara. By contrast, the San Luis Potosí countryside did not at that time become a focal point of insurrection. In part, population growth combined with a shift away from maize production undermined lower-class living standards in the Bajío. Structural changes left the rural poor more dependent upon the estate-owning élite. Parallel transformation took place in the textile and mining sectors linked to the Bajío cereal economy. In the central Guadalajara zone, the expansion of commercial agriculture in the wheat-producing haciendas appeared to threaten village maize-cultivators, who competed in the same urban market, with proletarianization. This perception, often coming in the aftermath of long-standing land and labour disputes between villages and estates, may help to explain the option for insurgent activity in the lakes-basin area of Guadalajara during the 1810s.

Outside the Bajío, village despair at the inability of colonial authorities to hold back the deterioration of local life explained widespread discontent. On the haciendas, though, resident workers enjoyed reasonable security through the patron–client relationship. They received housing and a maize ration from the proprietor as part of their wage. If local treatment of estate workers was tolerable, the patron–client linkage stood a chance of survival during the insurgency conditions of the 1810s, providing the landowner did not abandon his property through fear of approaching rebel bands. As a

result, proprietors had the possibility, especially if pressed hard by the Royalist authorities, to organize estate defense forces against insurgent raids.

Between 1795 and 1808, the colonial régime in Mexico City found itself economically weaker and increasingly politically isolated. Tensions within the ruling groups in key cities across the centre-north – Valladolid, San Luis Potosí, Zacatecas, and Guadalajara – during the years 1805–10 aggravated the impact of social dislocation. They threatened loss of political control at a time of imperial-level crisis in 1808 and mounting social tensions in the localities.

The Revolutionary Attempt and the Insurgency of the 1810s

The immediate cause of the insurrection of 1810 was the collapse of the viceregal government's legitimacy in September 1808. For the first time in 300 years no one authority in New Spain – or even the peninsula itself – could claim unequivocal allegiance. This situation raised to new heights the ongoing question of political representation, which had first emerged during the 1770s in reaction to the Bourbon reforms. French removal of the Spanish Bourbons during the Spring of 1808 presented Viceroy José de Iturrigaray (1803–8) with the problem of which peninsular authority to recognize and which factions to align with in Mexico. Iturrigaray tried to salvage his position by lending support to pressures from within the Mexican municipal élite for a series of juntas which would decide the political future of New Spain without reference to any particular Spanish authority. If successful, this procedure might have ensured a peaceful transition from peninsular absolutism to home rule. Autonomy and an oligarchic form of constitutionalism were brusquely aborted by a swift coup d'état from within the peninsular sector of the élite on the night of 15 September 1808. The coup overthrew Iturrigaray and led to the arrest of the leading autonomists.

The peninsular coup undermined the legitimacy of the colonial government. Furthermore, it prevented the Mexico City council from taking the lead in the opposition to absolutism and peninsular dominance. The initiative fell to the provinces and their dissident lower clergy, junior militia officers, and members of the civil professions. Although viceregal institutions had not broken down, a direct challenge to their legitimacy

came from the provinces. For that reason, the process of Independence took a different form in Mexico to that in the Spanish territories of South America, where capital-city élites and militia officers took control at an early stage. The impact of the multi-dimensional crisis plunged Mexico deeper into a revolutionary situation in the years 1808–10.

The insurrection of 1810 and the ensuing insurgency were exceptional phenomena in Mexican history. They were not simply peasant uprisings but from the outset had more general characteristics. Hatred of the Spaniards and a sense of offended religious belief formed a surrogate ideology for the risings that took place from September 1810 onwards. Hidalgo, against the advice of his immediate associates, appealed for popular mobilization and placed the Virgin of Guadalupe at the head of a movement for the removal of Spanish rule in Mexico City. Creole grievances against peninsular rule, however, proved not to be as potent as fear of social upheaval.

Although not a subversive cult by any means, the Guadalupe tradition symbolized a specific Mexican religious identity, which had developed slowly from the mid-seventeenth century. The religious dimension revealed a millennarian purpose of putting the world right by a sudden act of collective violence directed against those held responsible for the wrongs afflicting society. Van Young, for instance, has argued that the initial impact of the Hidalgo rebellion resulted from ‘a fundamental sense that something had gone wrong in the world and that the external realities no longer conformed to the moral order of country people’.

Within Latin America, the Mexican insurgency was distinguished by the scale of popular mobilization, its long duration, and deep local entrenchment. It left widespread social and economic dislocation in its wake. Ongoing research continues to examine lower social-group

perceptions and the motives for participation or withholding of support for this first great rural uprising in Mexican history. In central New Spain, for instance, corporate communities remained largely intact, an integral part of the colonial structure. Faced with less competition from the haciendas, they preserved greater control over their lands and labour force. Local communities did not rally to the insurrection of 1810, not even when rebel forces reached the heights above the Valley of Mexico in October. This indifference helped to explain insurgent loss of confidence and the defeats at Monte de las Cruces on 30 October and Aculco on 7 November. Militiamen recruited in San Luis Potosí, an area with a different social structure to the Bajío, formed the core of the victorious Royalist army at Aculco.

Local parish priests, as individuals rather than as a group, contributed substantially towards legitimizing rebellion at a time of economic and social dislocation, and providing leadership for it. Royalist army commanders, such as José de la Cruz in Guadalajara, blamed the local clergy, particularly in the diocese of Michoacán, for giving vent to rebellious sentiments. Taylor suggests that perhaps one in twelve of the total parish clergy participated in the insurgency during the 1810s, chiefly from three main areas, the centre-northwest, the Pacific *tierra caliente*, and the highland zones of the present-day State of Mexico.

The viceregal state did not collapse in 1810 under the impact of insurrection, despite strategic weaknesses in the inland cities and political weakness at the centre. Most significantly, the colonial authorities did not lose control of their armed forces in spite of defections. These factors made the situation in New Spain different from those of Revolutionary France in 1789 and Mexico itself in 1911. Although metropolitan Spain had been

defeated in war and broken financially by 1808 and in spite of civil conflict within the peninsula itself between 1808 and 1814, the viceregal state still did not collapse throughout the ten-year period 1810–20. When, furthermore, Father José María Morelos (1765–1815) replaced the undisciplined bands of the Hidalgo era with a more effective force, reliance on the *tierra caliente* as his base area ultimately frustrated his main attempts to gain control of the central valleys of Puebla and Mexico in 1811–13. Unable to dislodge royalist forces there, the insurgents adopted a political strategy of alternative government in order to challenge the viceregal government's legitimacy. This strategy also failed, in part because of the movement's reliance on local clans and *caciques* for leadership and support. The insurgents proved ultimately incapable of transforming locally based insurrections into a generalized political revolution. Accordingly, the provincial cadres which had first generated insurgency contributed in the long run to its disintegration. Local chieftains' limited horizons and frequent connections with landowners (if they were not so themselves) inhibited the development of a national movement and a social perspective.



Plate 5.4 Portrait of Father José María Morelos (1765–1815) by Petronilo Monroy (c. 1865). As in the case of the parallel portrait of Hidalgo, the stance preferred is that of the statesman rather than revolutionary, although the characteristic head-scarf and riding boots are preserved here. A skillful commander, Morelos sought to unite the diverse rebel bands and civilian supporters in the years, 1811–14. He played a major role in attempting to give effective political shape to the Insurgency. Defeated in Michoacán, he was captured, defrocked, and executed in December 1815

(By kind permission of the Patrimonio Nacional, Mexico)

Local realities conflicted with the broader social vision of the insurgency leadership. Morelos and his immediate supporters envisaged a dual revolution: independence from Spain combined with the abolition of caste distinctions at home. At the Congress of Chilpancingo, which opened in September 1813, and in the Constitution of Apatzingán (October 1814), they sought to create a republican constitutional system defined by the principle of equality before the law. In one sense this represented an insurgent response to the Spanish Constitution of 1812, which established a constitutional monarchy based on liberal principles. However, the insurgency itself had already fragmented into component local factions and had lost the political initiative in the country. Nevertheless, the Morelos leadership laid down a principle for other leaders to take up in more propitious circumstances. Within the movement itself, Vicente Guerrero (1783–1831), who struggled to assert his primacy after Morelos's execution in 1815, defended these principles until his judicial murder by conservative forces in February 1831. Thereafter, Juan Álvarez (1790–1867), *cacique* of the Pacific hinterland, followed in the tradition of Morelos and Guerrero.

The Spanish Constitutional Experiment

Above the anger generated at the microcosmic level, two other phenomena demand attention: the Mexico City élites' struggle to transform colonial absolutism into an autonomous, constitutional state, and the provincial elites' aim to reduce the power of the centralist viceregal government and enhance the position of regional centres of power. The abrupt termination of the first experiment in autonomy in September 1808 deprived the centre of leadership and provided the opening for the provincial elites. They, in turn, failed to subvert the militia, and appealed, instead, for popular mobilization. That released the pent-up anger already at boiling point, and, in the aftermath of two harvest failures, unleashed violent insurrection which gave free rein to social and racial animosity. Historical attention originally focused on this process, and the attempt to create an independent Mexican sovereign republic during the attempted revolution. The focus subsequently turned to how the Royalist army contained the insurgency – but were themselves worn down in the process. This latter helped to explain how Spain finally lost control in the Northern American part of the empire. Attention similarly turned to the behaviour of the urban élites during these events. Virginia Guedea's study of the *Guadalupes* in Mexico City has thrown the focus squarely on the capital-city's wary attitude to the insurgency under Morelos. The capital-city élite, at the same time, sought political advancement through the representative system established by the Spanish Constitution of 1812.

In Timothy Anna's view, 'The primary effect of Spain's first experiment in parliamentary and constitutional reform in the years from

1810 to 1814 under the Cortes and Constitution was that it revealed to Americans the essence of their status as colonial subjects' – 'it became clear that the Cortes and Constitution of Cádiz did nothing to solve the American crisis'. Part of the explanation for this lay in the fact that 'The Constitution's greatest weakness was ... the way in which it treated the vast empire as a monolith'. The failure of Spanish constitutionalists to deal effectively with the American question was highly significant, as many Americans would have preferred autonomy within the empire to outright independence. The breakdown of the Cortes's proposed middle way of unitary constitutionalism (which allowed no concession to American autonomy) pushed Spanish America further along the road to separatism.

There is, however, another dimension to the Constitution of 1812 – its impact within New Spain. The Constitution made the municipality the basis of social and political organization. It established juridical equality between Indians and the Hispanic population (although excluded the 'castes' and blacks from representation) and abolished the colonial *repúblicas de indios* in favour of constitutional town-councils. These provisions had a lasting impact in nineteenth-century Mexico. The Cortes extended the number of municipalities in accordance with population, and opened them by free elections with a broad franchise that incorporated a wide range of socio-ethnic groups. The number of local councils increased sharply, particularly in areas of predominantly Indian population such as Oaxaca, or with a large indigenous representation such as Puebla, Mexico, Tlaxcala, and Michoacán. These councils assumed powers previously exercised by the colonial authorities. Defense of municipal autonomy became a rallying cry of popular politics right through into the Revolution of the 1910s.

Liberalization of the municipalities, however, also had other implications. The Constitution established the classic liberal principle of equality before the law. Accordingly, 'Indians' as a category ceased to exist and became indiscriminately part of a generalized body of 'citizens'. They forfeited the protection of Spanish colonial law. The Indian municipalities were opened to all socio-ethnic groups, members of which could henceforth gain control over peasant resources. The struggle for power within the municipalities became a source of much local conflict throughout the century.

The restoration of absolutism by Ferdinand VII (1808–33) between 1814 and 1820 aborted these remarkable new developments. However, the collapse of royal absolutism in 1820 led to the proclamation of the 1812 Constitution by younger army officers in Spain. By September 1820, the constitutional system had been restored in New Spain. Forty-four of the forty-nine elected deputies from New Spain took their seats in the Madrid Cortes of 1820–1. They included Lucas Alamán (1789–1853) and Lorenzo de Zavala (1788–1836), both of whom would become leading political figures in the Mexican Republic. The Cortes, however, delayed taking action on American questions. Peninsular objections subverted American attempts to broaden the structure of the empire and the basis of representation, with the result that any last attempts to salvage Hispanic unity in both hemispheres rapidly floundered. In June 1821, for instance, Mexican deputies called for the territorial division of the Cortes into three sections representing New Spain–Central America, Northern South America, and Peru–Chile–Buenos Aires, with a royal-appointed executive (possibly a member of the royal family) in each of them with its own council of state and supreme court of justice. The Madrid government

regarded such a proposal as a violation of the Constitution. By the time the session closed on 30 June 1821, only twenty-three Mexican deputies still remained in the Cortes.

Within New Spain, however, the events set in motion between 1812 and 1814 took even more dramatic effect after 1820. The number of constitutional municipalities proliferated as power devolved on the local tiers of society. At the same time, the number of Provincial Deputations, originally established at six in 1813–14, multiplied in response to provincial demand for these small, elected committees. Eight were functioning in the territory of the Viceroyalty in 1821, nineteen (including New Mexico) by the end of 1822, and twenty-three by the end of 1823. Although designed by the Cortes to be agencies of metropolitan policy enforcement, they became, in reality, representative of provincial opinion. The diffusion of power away from the colonial state into the localities and provinces reflected the far-reaching reaction in the country to the centralism of the Bourbon administration.

The Final Overthrow of the Colonial State (1820–1821)

The disintegration of viceregal authority in Mexico City led to a political vacuum which the élite sought to fill in pursuit of its traditional goal of limited representation and autonomy within the empire. The chosen instrument was the disgraced Colonel Agustín de Iturbide (1783–1824), whom Viceroy Juan Ruiz de Apodaca, Conde del Venadito (1816–21), restored to military command in November 1820. Iturbide came from the provincial capital of Michoacán, where he had married into a prosperous family of local businessmen and landowners. He had been Morelos's principal military opponent in the Bajío between 1813 and 1816, but had been removed from command through allegations of corruption and arbitrary conduct. In contrast to 1808, the Mexico City élite now had a military arm. Coordinating his strategy with associated army commanders in the provinces, Iturbide opted for a replay of the strategy of closing in on Mexico City from the peripheral provinces which Morelos had unsuccessfully attempted in 1811–14. Two preconditions of success, however, were the support of a majority of Spanish-born commanders whose careers had been forged in the Royalist counter-insurgency and the cooperation of those remaining insurgent chieftains, such as Guerrero, still in the field. This made for a broad but contradictory movement guaranteed to fragment once it had achieved success. The support of the largely Spanish-born ecclesiastical hierarchy was gained through their fear of the ecclesiastical policy of the Liberal-dominated Cortes in Madrid.

Iturbide's Plan of Iguala on 24 February 1821 provided a platform for a wide consensus of opinion in New Spain to align tactically for the

achievement of a distinct Mexican state within the Hispanic monarchy. Iturbide's Army of the Three Guarantees (Independence, Union, Religion) entered Mexico City on 21 September 1821. The new regime sought to preserve as much of the old as possible. It represented essentially an attempt from within the Mexico City elite in alliance with a substantial section of the Royalist army to recreate central power. The object was to halt the rapid devolution of power to the regions and the lower echelons of society since the re-establishment of the 1812 Constitution. Since the thrust of this movement came from within the elite, the autonomist aim (the reality behind the seemingly contradictory objectives of Independence and Union), clearly derived from 1808. A limited form of constitutionalism was envisaged, which could guarantee the perpetuation of the elite in power at the national level.

Part Two: The Failures and Successes of a Newly Sovereign State, 1821–1867

Autonomy, Empire, and Separatism

The Treaty of Córdoba between the Cortes's appointee, Juan de O'Donojú, and Iturbide in August 1821 guaranteed autonomy for New Spain within the Spanish Empire and under the Bourbon monarchy. The successor state to New Spain, described as the Mexican Empire, would invite Ferdinand VII to rule in Mexico as Emperor, and in his default his younger brother, Don Carlos. In such a way, Mexico City, rather than Madrid, would become the centre of the Hispanic dominions, as Rio de Janeiro had been in the Luso-Brazilian monarchy between 1808 and 1821. Upon refusal, a Mexican Cortes would designate (or, in practice, search for) a monarch from among the various European royal houses. In the meantime, a Regency would exercise the executive power in the absence of the monarch. All existing laws, including the Cádiz Constitution of 1812, would remain in force until that forthcoming Cortes in Mexico City should promulgate a new constitution.

The new regime, in which Iturbide became Emperor Agustín I in May 1822, combined a centralist empire with a constitutional system. The first action of the Supreme Provisional Governing Junta was to convene a constituent congress to determine the structure of the new entity. The principle would be representation according to population, although with indirect election on the Cádiz model. Iturbide and his traditionalist allies within the coalition, however, disliked the Cádiz liberal ideas, and sought to establish some form of restricted, corporative representation more favourable to the elites. The Junta, accordingly, declared its intention not to be bound by the 1812 Constitution. When Congress opened in February 1822, it attributed sovereignty to itself. This seemed on the one hand to

reduce the role of Iturbide, and on the other to frustrate the desire of the provinces for a stronger constitutional status for themselves through participation in the exercise of sovereignty. Conflict between congress and executive deepened during the spring of 1822. Destabilization at the political centre would soon provide an opening for the provinces to push for the establishment of a federal system. At this crucial moment, Antonio López de Santa Anna made his first significant appearance on the Mexico political scene by allying with the opposition to Emperor Iturbide in 1823.

Mexico's Struggle for a Viable Constitutional Solution

The first federal Constitution in October 1824 sought to balance regional institutionalization in the form of a federal system with central government retention of the coordinating role. Conflict between prominent regional élites (backed by their military champions) in 1823–4 and the residual central government followed from the collapse of the First Mexican Empire in March 1823. Lack of popular backing for these élites enabled the centre to impose a compromise on the distribution of sovereignty within the federal structure that emerged in 1824. The interpretation of nineteenth-century Mexican political history often leads to the tempting hypothesis of a polarization between region and the idea of nation. The argument is that regional loyalties and the defense of states' rights undermined the possibility of national cohesion and consciousness. The first Federal Republic's failure to resolve the states' resistance to an effective and proportionate tax contribution to the national government lends credence to such a view. However, the explanation for this recalcitrance lay in the provincial perception of an over-centralized colonial political system, which Iturbide had sought to continue, and the fear that a fiscally sound centre would lead to the renewed subordination of the regions. The ongoing strength of Mexican federalism lay in the belief that the nation consisted not of an imposition upon the provinces but of the voluntary coming together of the many and varied regional component elements of the Mexican people in the institutionalized form of State governments, legislatures, and judiciaries. Accordingly, excessive centralism was seen as the cause of instability.



Plate 5.5 Lithograph of General Antonio López de Santa Anna (1794–1876). President from 1833–5, 1841–4, 1846–7, 1853–5, Santa Anna's reputation remains a matter of dispute. Lauded for the defeat of the Spanish invasion force of 1829, he was subsequently execrated for the loss of Texas in 1836 and the defeat by the US invasion forces in 1847, though praised for his actions against the first French intervention in 1838. His two attempts to establish a dictatorship in 1842–4 and 1853–5 ended in failure. Originating from the state of Veracruz, Santa Anna had a strong clientele there, as well as in Puebla and Mexico City. His strengths lay in an evidently engaging personality, despite general unreliability, and in the support of a strong segment of the army. Fluctuating between federalist and centralist factions, he initially fulfilled

the function of curbing extremes. His frequent reappearances owed much to his ability as a political fixer

(Getty Images)

By 1827–8, political tensions among the factions sustaining the federal republic broke out in armed conflict. The reversal of the presidential election results of 1828 by the armed intervention of the defeated party produced the first flagrant violation of the Constitution by those who claimed to support its principles. Region–centre suspicion and socio-ethnic tensions combined to undermine the first serious attempt by the new sovereign republic to establish a constitutional system on a lasting basis. Not military intervention but civilian politicians' invitations to military leaders, such as Anastasio Bustamante or Santa Anna, for assistance in pursuit of their particular goals characterised political behaviour in the period between Independence and Reform.

Centralist politicians, backed in the main by those two generals in the years, 1836–46 focused on the issue of instability. Their aim was to bolster the centralist system through the support of Church and Army. This proved to be over-optimistic, as the ecclesiastical hierarchy was still in the process of reconstitution during the mid-1840s, following the crisis over Independence. The Army, furthermore, consisted of disconnected factions under rival chieftains since the fall of the Empire in 1823. Santa Anna managed to stave off a French intervention in 1838 but at the cost of losing a leg.

Officers around Santa Anna sought to rebuild a coherent national army during the early 1840s and 1850s, but the state of government finances and the varying fortunes of Santa Anna himself both as politician and as general

frustrated their objective. Centralists identified two major sources of instability, as they saw it: excessive popular participation in the political processes and an inadequate national tax base. Their measures on direct taxation, however, exacerbated popular discontent.



Plate 5.6 Santa Anna and the Defense of Veracruz in 1838. A dispute over unpaid reparations led to a French attempt from November 1838 to March 1839 to punish a weak, divided Mexico and collect debts. A French fleet bombarded the off-shore fortress-prison of San Juan de Ulua. Santa Anna, still in disgrace after the loss of Texas in 1836, hurried down from his *hacienda* inland to fight the French but could not prevent their occupation of the port of Veracruz. Mexico was obliged to pay but Santa Anna was rehabilitated and came to power once more in 1841

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The centralist régime set about restricting the extent of popular participation in the political processes. Income qualifications and the

curtailment of municipal representation formed the two most characteristic aspects of centralism in these years. At the same time, the two centralist constitutions, the Seven Laws of 1836 and the Organic Bases of 1843, sanctioned the abolition of the federal structure created in 1824 and its replacement by departments under governors appointed by the President. A system of prefectures grouped together districts, which were run by sub-prefects in a hierarchy of dependency on the national government. This system also broke down over the fiscal question and the scale of popular resistance during the mid-1840s. Military division, factional rivalries, and regional polarities broke Santa Anna's first attempt at dictatorship in 1844. The onset of war with the United States during 1846 undermined General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga's attempt to transcend parties and factions by establishing an authoritarian system, which was rumoured to be a prelude to some form of monarchy.

Finance and the Economy

Government expenditure in 1822 exceeded revenue by more than 4 million pesos. Revenue was half the late colonial figure and expenditure far above the 1810 level. The army had doubled in size to 35,000 men and took up a huge share of the budget. Serious defense considerations accounted for this, as a Spanish force remained off Veracruz until 1823. Spain still controlled Cuba, showed no indication of recognizing Mexican Independence, and landed a force of 3,500 men in 1829 in a vain attempt at reconquest. Furthermore, the United States, which in 1819 acquired Spanish Florida, presented a potential threat, particularly due to the expanding cotton economy of the southern states and Anglo-American penetration into eastern Texas. Independent Mexico was ill prepared to cope with such dangers. The First Empire, which inherited an outstanding debt of 76 million pesos from the colonial régime, including 10 million pesos of unpaid interest, recognized 45 million pesos of this debt in 1822. Two loans secured in 1824–5 from the London merchant banking houses of Goldschmidt & Co. and Barclay, Herring, Richardson & Co. created the new phenomenon of the external debt. Of the projected 32 million pesos, Mexico received only 17.6 million pesos, due to commissions and other administrative costs. These loans, which indicated the precarious position of the country, failed to alleviate the newly established federal government's financial situation after October 1824. One-third of the customs receipts of Veracruz and Tampico had to be set aside for repayment. The British bondholders, who had welcomed the opportunity to make money in Mexico, saw the country as a richly endowed silver-producer. By 1827,

however, the federal government could not pay the interest owing to its London creditors, with the result that the bondholders remained unpaid thereafter. A bondholders' committee was formed in London to press the British government for assistance.

Mexico along with most other Latin American countries forfeited its creditworthiness in the judgement of the international banking community. Accordingly, the government's internal debt rose alarmingly. The practice of mortgaging future customs revenues in return for ready loans from merchants began around 1828. With the focus of revenue-raising clearly on external trade, government avoided the politically controversial issue of systematic, direct taxation. The taxation issue remained at the heart of the fiscal problems of the First Federal Republic and the Central Republic that succeeded it. The phenomenon of the impoverishment of the early independent state remained a major issue in a potentially wealthy country. Attention in political circles focused, regardless of ideology, on the question of Church wealth, particularly in view of high diocesan revenues in Mexico and Puebla.

During the 1830s, the financial situation worsened considerably. In 1832–5, for instance, the government suspended public employees' salaries and replaced them with bonds. Expenditure reached 16 million pesos by 1833–4, although revenue produced no more than 13 million. The first Liberal government's consideration of the transfer of ecclesiastical revenues to the state contributed to its downfall in April 1834. In 1835–6, the federal system collapsed altogether. The abolition of the States centralized finance in the national government. The centralist régime in 1835 mortgaged the state-controlled half of the Fresnillo silver mines as collateral for a loan of 1 million pesos from a consortium of businessmen: thirty-six of them,

including Manuel Escandón, formed a company to put the mines on a productive basis.

The Texas crisis led to outright hostilities in 1835–6, but the Santa Anna administration initially could find only 3,500 troops ready for combat. The high cost of the army had not produced a sufficiently large force capable of rapid mobilization. Santa Anna had to raise an improvised, expeditionary army of 6,000 men specifically for the purpose of defeating the Texas rebels. The loss of Texas, which left New Mexico perilously exposed, was followed by a dispute with the French, which led to a naval blockade of Veracruz in 1838 and frustrated efforts at reconquest in the north. This first French intervention brought Santa Anna back to favour after his humiliating capture by Sam Houston's Texan forces at San Jacinto in 1836.

The fiscal measures introduced by the centralist régime between 1836 and 1846 were designed to meet these inherited problems, but in the long run they failed to resolve them. Although the British debt was consolidated in 1837 at 5 per cent interest, unpaid interest continued to accumulate. By 1839, the budget deficit alone approached 16 million pesos. Between 1835 and 1840, there were twenty Finance Ministers. Government continued to be largely at the mercy of importers with sufficient capital to act as creditors. The generalization of the capitation tax in 1842 provided the spark that ignited a series of local rebellions across the principal areas of peasant and indigenous land retention. By the late 1840s, the most widespread popular mobilization since the insurgency of the 1810s was taking place.

During the second presidency of José Joaquín de Herrera (June 1848–January 1851), there were sixteen Ministers of Finance, among them

Manuel Payno, the most able. In July 1848, in the aftermath of defeat in the War with the United States, Payno estimated the combined internal and external debt to have reached 56.3 million pesos. Since 1821, 26 per cent of customs revenues, the principal government income, had been assigned towards the servicing of debt. Even so, the government already owed civil and military employees 25 million pesos in arrears. Payno attempted a reorganization of national finances in 1850–1 on the basis of a 5 per cent tax on the value of all urban and rural properties. At the same time, the government sought to renegotiate the London debt incurred since 1824. The obligations of the external debt, not honoured between 1828 and 1851, further restricted government financial scope. The Doyle Convention of 1851 initiated a short period of interest repayment of the British debt. Following the final return of Santa Anna to power in 1853, expenditure was estimated at more than 17 million pesos, with the army costing 8.5 million. The rapid decomposition of the régime, following the death of Alamán, its principal figure, further worsened the state of national finances and led to the disillusionment of the entrepreneurs who had initially sustained it.

The adverse state of national finances, combined with the perception of political instability due to frequent changes of government by violent means, gave foreign observers the impression of an abject people incapable of running their own affairs as an independent state. The negative views of foreign diplomats are there to read in the archives. European governments formed their policies on such a basis. Mexico, however, was in many respects wealthier and more stable than it appeared. In the first place, the country's principal export, silver, continued to be in great international demand throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. The Mexican agent of Baring Bros. estimated that the legal export of gold and silver

came to an annual average of 8 million pesos between 1826 and 1851, but that the illegal export was probably slightly more, making a final total of 18 million pesos. In 1860, the official figure for precious-metal production came to 24 million pesos, comparable with the peak years of the late colonial era.

The War With the United States (1846–1848) and the Loss of the Mexican Far North

The War of 1846–8 formed the most dramatic part of a process which had begun in 1835 with the Texas rebellion and did not fully run its course until the final defeat of the Confederacy in the civil war within the United States in 1865 and the collapse of the Second Mexican Empire in 1867. This process involved the readjustment of the balance of power on the North American continent in favour of the United States and to the disadvantage of Mexico. Although its origins went back to the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 and Spain's loss of the Floridas in 1819, the full implications of the territorial expansion of the USA were not felt by Mexico until the 1830s. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 confirmed the loss of Texas, New Mexico, and Upper California. The significance of these events is obscured by the traditional historical focus on the 1848 Revolutions in Europe. If these events represented, as A. J. P. Taylor argued, a turning point at which Central Europe failed to turn, on the North American sub-continent history most decidedly turned. Even after the loss of the entire far north between 1846 and 1853, US pressure for further territorial cessions in Lower California, Sonora, and Chihuahua, and for transit rights across Mexican territory to the Pacific Ocean did not cease until at least 1860. In fact, the decade after Guadalupe Hidalgo was a period of intense pressure by the US government and private interests for concessions from Mexico. This pressure rose to a climax during the Mexican Civil War of the Reform (1858–61) and culminated in the McLane–Ocampo Treaty of 1859.

The war between Mexico and the United States originated from the decree of the US Congress annexing Texas to the USA in June 1845, which the Texas Republic accepted on 4 July. The Herrera administration ordered Paredes y Arrillaga to advance north with 7,000 troops, but the latter ignored the order and remained in San Luis Potosí in order to await the moment to remove the government in Mexico City. Herrera sought ways of avoiding war in view of Mexico's desperate financial situation, military unpreparedness, and political divisions. The Mexican government had even been prepared to recognize Texan Independence, but that moment passed. The removal of Herrera by Paredes on 31 December 1845 delayed responses to growing pressures from the US southern states for an annexationist conflict with Mexico. President James K. Polk's Democratic administration which had taken office in March 1845 represented these tendencies. In the meantime, Brigadier General Zachary Taylor's army advanced to the Río Bravo in early March, with the object of threatening Matamoros. This action, which has occasioned too little comment in the literature, constituted a calculated violation of the post-1836 Mexican frontier, which was on the Río Nueces, not further south on the Río Bravo.

Mexican forces initiated action across the Río Bravo (that is, while operating strictly within Mexican territory) on 25 April 1846, in order to remove the danger to the northern river port. Mariano Arista (1802–55) unsuccessfully sought to hold Taylor north of the Río Bravo in the two battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma on 8 and 9 May, when US artillery took its first heavy toll of Mexican infantry. Failure led to the definitive loss of Department of Tamaulipas territory between the Nueces and Bravo rivers. The US Government maintained that this territory formed part of the Texas Republic annexed in 1845, which historically it did not.

Action in that sphere, however, provided the ill-founded pretext for a declaration of war by the United States on 11 May. A disastrous Mexican retreat from Matamoros on 17 May, effectively abandoned by Arista, reduced the original force of 4,000 men to just over 2,600. The Mexican Congress warned the United States on 7 July 1846 that it would repel invasion forces, though it stopped short of a declaration of war.

The war quickly assumed catastrophic proportions. The deteriorating situation within Upper California had already degenerated to the brink of civil war between north and south by 1846. Monterey and San Francisco, the two principal positions in northern Alta California, fell to US forces in the first days. Commodore Robert F. Stockton occupied Los Angeles on 13 August. On 17 August, Governor Manuel Armijo virtually handed over New Mexico to a US force of 850 men from Fort Leavenworth (Kansas) under Colonel Stephen W. Kearny which had marched across the Santa Fe Trail. Kearny took San Diego, the last important Californian position, on 12 December. Fighting resumed in the Los Angeles area but resistance was crushed by 8 January 1847. However, a rising against US forces in Taos, New Mexico, delayed full US control until early February. In such a way, the remainder of the far north, which had been bitterly fought for since the middle of the sixteenth century, was lost in a few months.

The collapse of the north-eastern frontier exposed the country to invasion. Accordingly, Monterrey became the US objective. The seriousness of the situation brought about the collapse of the Paredes regime, when General Mariano Salas took power in Mexico City on 6 August. The immediate consequence was the termination of the Centralist Republic of 1836–46 and the restoration of the federal system in accordance with the Constitution of 1824. A drastic change of political structure in the

middle of a war which Mexico was not winning further destabilized the country. An arrangement between Valentín Gómez Farías and Santa Anna brought the latter back to power as potential saviour of the nation. By the time Santa Anna left for the front on 28 September, Monterrey had already fallen to US forces five days earlier after heavy street fighting. Furthermore, a second US invasion force operated in Chihuahua and Coahuila from October 1846.

Leaving Gómez Farías in control of the administration in Mexico City, Santa Anna made San Luis Potosí his base of operations, but on 16 November Taylor occupied Saltillo. Santa Anna aimed to retake this city at the beginning of 1847. A force of 21,000 men left San Luis Potosí by early February to drive US occupation forces from the Coahuila state capital, but awful marching conditions combined with desertions to reduce this army by 4,000. Taylor held Santa Anna's army, again through the decisive use of artillery, at the Battle of Angostura (or Buenvista) on 22–23 February. Suffering heavy losses in killed, wounded, and missing, Santa Anna fell back towards San Luis Potosí, a retreat which cost him half the remaining force.

In spite of Mexican territorial losses and defeats, the war had continued for ten months since April 1846 without a final Mexican defeat. Fighting would continue for a further seven months until the occupation of Mexico City in September 1847. The territorial outcome of the war has generally obscured the fact of its long duration – long in terms of Mexican weakness. The length of the war took its toll on the three US invasion forces, producing heavier losses than those sustained by the French Army during the War of the Intervention of 1862–7. Again, this is not generally recognized in the historical literature. The USA put 104,556 men in the

field as regulars and volunteers, but 13,768 of them died in what came to be known as 'The Mexican War'. This represented the highest death rate in any war fought by the United States in its history up to the present time. The war understandably had considerable impact within the United States, especially as the Republican Party, and one of its rising figures, Abraham Lincoln, strongly opposed it primarily on the grounds that it worked entirely in the southern interest. These factors may well contribute to an explanation of why no further Mexican territory was taken in the 1848 Treaty and why, in spite of US strategic designs and southern material interests, no attempt was made to occupy and annex the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in a manner comparable to the US occupation of the Panama Canal Zone in 1903.

Mexican refusal of US peace proposals led to the opening of a second front at Veracruz, designed to end the war by the occupation of Mexico City. This final process itself took seven months. General Winfield Scott's five-day artillery bombardment of Veracruz led to collapse of morale in the port city, which saw itself financially and militarily abandoned by the national government. The surrender of Veracruz on 28 March 1847 effectively opened the US second front. A hastily formed Mexican Army of the Eastern Front with between 10,000 and 12,000 men failed to hold US forces at the strategic passage of Cerro Gordo between the tropical, yellow-fever country and the uplands on 17–18 April. The breakthrough led to the fall of Jalapa and General Valentín Canalizo's callous abandonment of the fort of Perote. This left Puebla open to US occupation on 15 May. The War with the United States finally reached the Valley of Mexico, where previously it had been regarded as a remote affair confined to the north, little different to the Texas War which had preceded it in 1835–6. The

capital city, unlike Veracruz, immune from foreign attack in 1829 and 1838, faced the prospect of defeat and occupation. For the first time in their national history, Mexico City politicians would have to witness the consequences of their own internecine conflicts and failures.

The first defeats in the perimeter of Mexico City at Padierna and Churubusco on 19 and 20 August, in spite of strong defensive positions and numerically superior forces, opened the prospect of final collapse. A truce on 23 August made way for initial US peace proposals. These, presented on 1 September, envisaged a new northern border at the Río Bravo, with the complete loss of New Mexico and Upper California, and the US right to perpetual free transit across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The rejection of these terms led to the renewal of hostilities on 7 September. Two further terrible defeats followed, at Molino del Rey and Chapultepec on 8 and 12 September, the latter involving a thirteen-hour artillery bombardment of the citadel defended in part by cadets of the Military School. On the following day, US forces entered Mexico City. Santa Anna resigned on 16 September, and resistance officially ended on the following day.

In contrast to the subsequent French Intervention, the military struggle against US invasion forces took place virtually entirely between armies and without large-scale popular participation. Much still remains to be said concerning the absence of resistance comparable to that of the Spanish insurrection against the French in the Peninsular War of Independence in 1808–13 or the *juarista* opposition to the French in Mexico after 1862. The War of 1846–7 exposed the failure of the Mexican officer corps, the obsolete weapons of the army, and the inadequacy of its logistical support. US artillery played a key role at all stages.



Plate 5.7 The US Army enters Mexico City, 14 September 1847. Repeated political division, recurrent popular resistance to direct taxation, logistic deficiencies, tactical miscalculations, and inadequate artillery all accounted for Mexico's defeat in the War with the United States. The annexation of Texas, still considered in Mexico to be a Mexican province, by the US Congress provided the mainspring for the war. In reality, US expansionism lay behind this.

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United States territorial designs on the Mexican far north were assuaged in part by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed on 2 February 1848. The question of further cessions in Chihuahua, Sonora, and Lower California and transit rights across Mexican territory to the Pacific ports and also across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec persisted throughout the 1850s. Transit rights and the construction of a road, railway, or canal across the Isthmus, a major US objective pressed by New Orleans commercial interests, had been raised in the preliminary terms proposed by the United States during the brief cease-fire of 24 August to 7 September 1847 but

were not included in the clauses of the final peace treaty. This issue reappeared, however, in the Treaty of La Mesilla in December 1853, which arranged the Gadsden Purchase of territory including Tucson south of the Gila River. The transit question provided the basis of the McLane–Ocampo Treaty of December 1859.

The Isthmus of Tehuantepec, at Independence still very much a frontier zone, remained defenseless during the War with the United States. Serious rebellions with deep-rooted local grievances ensured that the state government of Oaxaca effectively lost control of the southern Isthmus after February 1847. US forces never invaded Oaxaca, however, despite the advance through the contiguous states of Veracruz and Puebla. Although the Oaxaca state government remained apprehensive, US forces never attempted to seize the Isthmus during the war. The US desire to end the war became evident once Mexico City had been taken.

Even so, it took nearly five months to achieve the final peace. The question remains to be asked: why did Mexico not lose more territory in 1848? The answer may lie in the impact of the war within the United States, the deepening political divisions there especially between North and South, the heavy loss of life during the conflict, and the recognition that the remaining territorial goals could be pursued by different methods.



Map 5.2 Territorial Losses to the United States

The Persistence of Social Unrest

The insurgency of the 1810s resolved none of New Spain's social conflicts. They resurfaced at repeated intervals during the fifty years after Independence. The close linkage between rural rebellions and major political upheavals at national level, which had become evident in the 1810s, recurred during the 1840s and 1850s, as it would again during the Revolution of the 1910s. This interrelation distinguished nineteenth-century rebellions from those of the colonial era, and suggests a closer national integration, combined with peasant political awareness, than has traditionally been supposed. Elite divisions at the centre accompanied rivalries between centre and regions, and between regional capitals and localities. In the 1840s and 1850s, popular rebellions reached their maximum incidence since the time of the insurgency. The War with the United States took place in the midst of a period of internal social conflict, which the war itself made worse.

Conflict over land assumed greater importance in rural protest than it had during the colonial era, when the most common disputes focused on tax burdens and administrative abuses. The peasantry's resilience could be seen in defense of community traditions and municipal autonomy. Peasants had taken part in cross-class alliances during the Insurgency and in the late 1820s, the 1840s, and the 1850s. In certain provinces and contexts, peasants themselves also took initiatives in forging alliances within and beyond their own social group. The experience of the Insurgency, in fact, broadened peasant perspectives, with the result that nineteenth-century movements frequently involved wider alliances and a more overtly political intent

covering a broad range of issues. Peasant resistance spread across the southern perimeter of the central valleys from Tlapa and Chilapa after 1842 and thence into the Oaxaca Mixteca. In 1847, conflicts over landownership and salt deposits in the southern Isthmus led to armed conflict after 1847. In the same year, the ‘caste war’ began in the sugar zone of Yucatán, which would drag on through subsequent decades. Peasant direct action in the Mixteca, again locally described as a ‘caste war’, continued into the early 1850s; in the Veracruz coastal zone, conflict over land titles and hacienda encroachments inflamed the situation in Tuxpan, Papantla, and Huejutla, between 1847 and 1849; a large-scale uprising took place in Tula, north of the Valley of Mexico, in 1847–8. The Sierra Gorda rebellion from August 1847 spread through Querétaro, Hidalgo, Guanajuato, zones which had experienced strong insurgent activity in the 1810s, and threatened the southern sector of San Luis Potosí. An armed force of over 3,000 men was eventually formed in order to contain the rebellion, a difficult task in the aftermath of national defeat.

Although the 1840s saw the most extensive popular mobilization since the 1810s, not until the Revolution of Ayutla of 1854–5 did a national-level leadership emerge. Elite conflict at national and state levels, severe from 1844, provided the openings for such movements to have such impact. National defeat in 1847 explained the general dislocation and military incapacity. Alamán used the opportunity of national defeat combined with internal upheaval to argue for a return to the type of monarchy, which, in his view, had brought Mexico stability during the viceregal period. Alamán founded the Conservative Party in 1849 at this particularly difficult time for Mexico.

The major sources of conflict centred on control of local government and the extent of the franchise, the implications of citizenship and participation in the political processes, and the relationship between centre and regions. All these issues fueled the Revolution of Ayutla. Álvarez used this unrest to construct an alliance of interests determined to bring down Santa Anna's attempt at a centralist dictatorship. Beginning in March 1854, the coalition of forces that eventually composed the revolutionary movement forced out Santa Anna in August 1855.

Essentially a southern and popular movement in origins, the Revolution of Ayutla did not capture power without the intervention of the political barons of the north-centre and north. Many of them, such as Santiago Vidaurri (1808–67) in Nuevo León and Coahuila, acted independently of the original Ayutla rebels and pursued their own specific objectives. The initial leadership provided by Álvarez responded to conditions within the sphere of influence he had been extending northwards from the coast during the 1840s. In effect, he acted as broker between the village communities and the government in Mexico City. The earlier re-establishment of federalism in 1846 recognized Álvarez's power by creating the State of Guerrero in 1849. Álvarez became the first State Governor, an office which later passed to his son between 1862 and 1869.

The Reform Era (1855–1876) and the Rise of Benito Juárez

The Liberal Reform movement presented a direct challenge to the Catholic inheritance of Mexico. The challenge came in several stages, the intensity of each one determined by the strength of resistance. For the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the reform movement came in the aftermath of the reconstitution of the Mexican hierarchy during the 1830s and 1840s. Catholic alarm at state-level measures since the mid-1820s and early 1830s had already stimulated a polemical defense of the Catholic identity of Mexico and the close integration of Church and state. Catholic newspapers emerged in the late 1840s and those such as 'La Cruz' (1855–8) subjected Liberal ideology to concerted attack. The Conservative Party took up defense of endangered religion as a principal issue.

The antecedents of Liberal Reform legislation lay in the measures taken by the Spanish Cortes of 1810–14 and 1820–3, and had common roots in the European Enlightenment, which sought to reduce the role of the Catholic Church in society. The principal Reform legislation began between 1855 and 1860. The struggle to give effect to Mexico's second federal Constitution in February 1857 took place during this phase. The two subsequent phases, 1861–3 and the period after 1867, corresponded to Liberal victories in two civil wars with their Conservative opponents, and led to further attempts to impose the Reform programme.

The Revolution of Ayutla represented a broad coalition of forces. Liberals formed part of this but were divided between moderates and radicals. That division went back at least to the 1830s. Moderates were often able to provide the bridge which brought Catholics and Conservatives

into the coalition. The key figure on the moderate wing was Ignacio Comonfort (1812–63), retired militia colonel, Puebla *hacienda*-owner, and former Prefect of Tlapa in the early 1840s. Although closely associated with Álvarez since his time as Customs Administrator in Acapulco, Comonfort brought into the Ayutla coalition moderates such as the Guanajuato politician Manuel Doblado (1818–65) as well as the Conservative General Félix Zuloaga (1813–98), who came from a leading Chihuahua *hacienda*-owning family. Radical capture of the Álvarez provisional government of October–December 1855, however, broke this alliance apart. The Querétaro-born General Tomás Mejía (1820–67), who had risen to prominence in the War against the United States, went into opposition in the name of defense of the Catholic identity of Mexico, and raised rebellion in the Sierra Gorda. This area provided Mejía with a base of operations from which to launch a series of campaigns against Liberal regimes during the following eight years. Out of these political divisions and military conflicts arose the presidency of Benito Juárez (1806–72).



Plate 5.8 Benito Juárez (1806–72). Virtually all the photos and representations of President Juárez (1858–72) are formal and somber, a conscious contrast to the flamboyant depictions of military figures such as Santa Anna, whom Juárez despised. The chosen image of Juárez is as the epitome and defender of republican virtue. Of Zapotec origin in the Oaxaca highland village of Guelatao, Juárez argued for the integration of the Indian population into the liberal constitutional system as participating citizens. He saw this as the means of social improvement. He was a skilled political operator, with a loyal group of allies, including in Oaxaca, able to outmanoeuvre all his opponents, whether Conservatives or Liberals. Although he based his authority on the Federal

Constitution of 1857, he sought, after 1867, to strengthen executive and central powers

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Although conceived as a moderate measure, the first major Reform decree opened wide the latent divisions in the country. The Juárez Law of November 1855 sought to subordinate ecclesiastical corporate privilege to the civil law, rather than abolish it altogether. Juárez, Governor of Oaxaca from 1847 to 1852 and Secretary for Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs in the Álvarez administration, was a leading advocate of the supremacy of the civil power. Archbishop Lázaro de la Garza (1785–1862) of Mexico City condemned the Law as an attack on the Church itself. Clerical rebellions in Puebla in 1855–6 undermined the government's conciliatory policies, and led to a full-scale military operation to reduce the province to obedience.

The Law of 25 June 1856, identified with Finance Minister Miguel Lerdo de Tejada (1812–61), proved to be considerably more controversial than the *Ley Juárez*. The Lerdo Law envisaged the conversion of the corporate properties owned by the Church and by Indian communities into units of private ownership, generally favouring existing tenants. The objectives were initially twofold: to release hitherto inalienable property on to the market, thereby encouraging development, and to raise revenue through government taxation of this process. These highly idealistic goals failed to recognize the unsettled condition of political affairs, the scale of opposition likely to arise, the opportunities provided for speculators, and the generally complicated nature of the procedures involved. Very soon, civil war made fiscal considerations paramount. Accordingly, the Liberal

aim to facilitate the emergence of a class of numerous and active small proprietors soon fell by the wayside. The Law, in any case, had made no provision for prior division of properties before sales. Enactment of the Law created many new interests which strongly opposed its reversal.

Adjudication and sales appear to have totalled some 20.5 million pesos by the end of 1856. Lerdo himself believed that less than half the value of eligible ecclesiastical property had been transferred in that period. However, the brunt of the *Ley Lerdo* fell not on the Church, which owned mainly urban property bought up by many Liberal politicians, but on the large number of peasant communities. Their response to Liberal policies depended on the advantages or disadvantages they could expect. This, in turn, depended on the speed with which local Liberal administrations enacted the Law and the alignment of forces sustaining them. Some communities with a tradition of private or family land usage were able to benefit, especially where they were already well integrated into the market economy. Full implementation of the Law was overtaken by the decade of warfare from 1857 to 1867. Liberal loss of power at the national level between January 1858 and January 1861, and again from June 1863 until July 1867, interrupted the disamortization procedure.

Comonfort's belief that the 1857 Constitution weakened the central executive and handed effective power to the state governors led to the disintegration of his moderate Liberal administration at the end of 1857, and the imposition of a Conservative régime in the centre-core zone by the army. Juárez, who as President of the Supreme Court had the constitutional right to the succession, was recognized as interim President within Liberal-controlled territories by an alliance of radicals and north-central state governors in January 1858. Repeatedly defeated by Conservative generals,

Miguel Miramón (1831–67), Leonardo Márquez (1820–1913), and Mejía, who retained control of the central zones, the Liberals finally established their administration in Veracruz from May 1858 until early January 1861.

The Veracruz administration resumed the Reform measures in July 1859 under Lerdo's pressure. The Law for the Nationalization of Ecclesiastical Properties on 12 July made explicit the connection between disamortization and the deplorable condition of national finances. Government estimates of the value of Church properties at between 100 and 150 million pesos at that time were probably too high in view of ecclesiastical property losses since the Bourbon era. Furthermore, Liberal calculations frequently included church buildings and treasures such as sacred vessels. Lerdo hoped in vain to secure a loan in the USA guaranteed against receipts from the sale of expropriated properties. Anti-clerical state governors in Jalisco, Michoacán, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas had already anticipated the Veracruz decree and implemented measures of their own. Ultimately, government income from the sales proved disappointing. The Mexican state received scarcely more than a million pesos from the disamortization in 1856 and just over 10 million pesos from the continuing procedure and the nationalization combined in the years before the Liberals lost control of Mexico City to the French Intervention. By 1910, the total revenue received was still only 23 million pesos.

A further series of laws restricted the role of the Catholic Church in society. On 26 April 1856, civil recognition of religious vows was removed, and on 11 April 1857 the Iglesias Law, responding to local complaints of clerical fiscal pressures, deprived the parish clergy of a range of traditional fees. The Law of 23 July provided for marriage legally to be a civil contract, although it did not go as far as to legislate divorce with the right to

remarry during the lifetime of the separated party. A Civil Registry of births, marriages, and deaths came into force under the legislation of 28 July, and Juárez duly registered his newly born son. The number of religious holidays was reduced on 11 August and several secular holidays introduced to commemorate national events. The Liberal administration forbade religious celebrations outside church buildings and made the use of church bells subject to police regulations. Clerical dress was prohibited in public. On 4 December 1860, the Liberal régime legislated religious freedom, in accordance with the Constitution's neutrality on the subject of the exclusive Catholic establishment. This opened the way for Protestant evangelization in the country, which the Liberals viewed with favour once they had regained power temporarily in 1861 and definitively after 1867.

The Constitution of February 1857, by contrast to its predecessor in 1824, failed to recognize Catholicism as the religion of state. Opposition from the ecclesiastical hierarchy, already incensed by the earlier laws of Juárez and Lerdo, was immediate. The bishops, led by Archbishop Pelagio Labastida (1816–91) and Bishop Clemente de Jesús Munguía (1810–68) of Michoacán, portrayed the Constitution as an assault on Catholicism and an attempt to replace what they understood to be a Catholic society with a secularized model based on foreign examples. The hierarchy and clerical polemicists argued for the defense of the Catholic identity of Mexico inherited from the Spanish colonial era. At the same time, they argued against the liberal doctrine of sovereignty of the people and in favour of the Church's right to possess property and to exercise control over education and private morality. Munguía led the attack on the Reform Laws through the Bishops' Manifesto of 30 August 1859.

Lerdo's efforts to secure a US loan accompanied by the negotiation of the McLane–Ocampo Treaty played into Conservative hands. The Juárez administration secured US recognition on 6 April 1859. Although the Liberals regarded this as a political triumph, because they saw it as the closer identification of the two North American Republics, Conservatives denounced it as a sell-out to the national enemy. Since the US Government had withdrawn recognition of the Conservative régime in Mexico City because it refused to entertain further territorial cessions, Conservatives warned that Liberal foreign policy would result in further loss of territory and even the complete subordination of Mexico to the United States. Lerdo, Ocampo, and Juárez were sensitive to this criticism, which threatened serious damage to the nationalist credentials of the Liberal cause. Accordingly, the McLane–Ocampo Treaty of December 1859 avoided territorial cessions to the United States but conceded transit rights both to the Pacific ports and across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The Treaty frustrated the expansionist designs of the US administration, but never came into effect because of the deterioration of the political situation within the United States in 1860–1.

After the Conservative military defeat in December 1860, the Liberals recovered control of the capital, although Conservative guerrilla bands operated across the countryside. Miramón, who had won most of the battles but lost the war, went into exile in Havana and thence to Europe. However, Márquez remained active and Mejía operated from his personal stronghold in the Sierra Gorda. A handful of monarchist exiles in Europe, with the support of some Conservatives, intrigued with the French Emperor Napoleon III for the establishment of a monarchy in Mexico by means of foreign military intervention.

Juárez, already three years in office as *de facto* President in the Liberal zone, was elected President of the Republic for the first time in March 1861 with a convincing majority. Nevertheless, his election did not end the factional divisions and personal rivalries within his party. Following the restoration of constitutional government, these hostilities spread through the political processes, pitting congress against the executive, and the state governors against the central power. Internal conflicts weakened national government, already burdened by interest payment on the external debt as a result of the civil war's impact on national finances. The total debt, which had reached 90 million pesos in 1851, stood at 82 million pesos by 1861. The outstanding debt to British bondholders, which formed part of that total, reached over 51 million pesos in this latter year.

At the same time, the fragmentation of the United States with the secession of the southern states and the formation of the Confederacy in February 1861 had serious implications for Mexico. In the first instance, it was unclear whether the Confederacy intended to continue traditional southern expansion at Mexico's expense or bring it to an end. The existence of seceded states on the precarious northern frontier of Mexico affected the relationship of the frontier states themselves to the national government in Mexico City. Considerable discussion ensued concerning the idea of a 'Republic of the Sierra Madre', consisting of the northern tier of states associated perhaps with an independent Texas and drawing New Mexico into its orbit. This idea had gained currency during the Revolution of Ayutla, when the north-east rebelled against the crumbling dictatorship of Santa Anna. Vidaurri, who had annexed Coahuila to Nuevo León in 1856 and had designs on the federal customs revenues of the Río Bravo from

Piedras Negras to Matamoros, remained willingly or unwillingly at the centre of regionalist opposition to the Juárez administration.

The Intervention (1862–1867)

On 17 July 1861, the Juárez administration attempted to assert federal-government control over all revenues appropriated by state governors. These included the revenues of the river ports as well as those of the Gulf and Pacific coasts. The government's evident aim was to strengthen its fiscal position at a time when the situation on the northern frontier remained precarious. This decree, however, involved suspension of payments on the external debt for a two-year period; it did not repudiate the debt. The European Powers, their financial interests already damaged during the civil war, took this as a pretext for a demonstration of force, designed to oblige Mexico to honour its engagements. Great Britain, France, and Spain signed the Tripartite Convention of London in October 1861, which provided for joint occupation of the customs houses of the main ports, beginning with Veracruz, in order to enforce debt-payment. The threat of a European intervention seriously diverted the Juárez government from its two main objectives: the secure establishment of the constitutional system and the Reform Laws, and the stabilization of the situation on the northern frontier.

Juárez managed to extract from a reluctant Congress the concession of extraordinary faculties in an attempt to defend national sovereignty in face of the European intervention. Further congressional concessions followed in October 1862 and May 1863. Treason laws would be applied to those who co-operated with the Intervention. The most far-reaching measure was the Law of 25 January 1862, which imposed trial by courts-martial and the penalty of capital punishment for collaboration with the Intervention, without the possibility of government pardon for those condemned under

the law. This law provided the basis for the Juárez administration's treatment of the Intervention. Maximilian, Miramón, and Mejía were executed in June 1867 in accordance with its provisions.

French political designs in Mexico were made possible by the civil war which had broken out in the United States in April 1861. Realization that the French intended to intervene directly in Mexican internal affairs and enforce a change of régime led to the withdrawal of the other two powers by the spring of 1862. The unilateral French intervention after April 1862 presupposed the nullification of Juárez's election in the previous year and the superimposition of a system in Mexico acceptable to the French government. In such a way, Mexico would fall into the French imperial orbit, though more indirectly than were Indo-China or Algeria. The French objective, initially working in concert with Mexican exiles, was to remove the Republic established under the 1857 Constitution in favour of a monarchy under a European prince. The candidate selected was the Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, younger brother of the Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph. Maximilian had been a liberal-minded Governor of Lombardy in 1858–9, and had travelled to Brazil, where the Empress Leopoldina was also a Habsburg. This scheme, however, involved a prior French conquest of Mexico, and the assumption that Mexican Conservatives would be effective collaborators. French military calculations, nevertheless, failed to learn from the American experience of 1846–7 of long delays and huge loss of life.

The French defeat outside Puebla on 5 May 1862 postponed occupation of the capital for a further year. This military setback delayed Napoleon III's plans for a monarchy. Juan Nepomuceno Almonte (1803–69), illegitimate son of Morelos, returned to Mexico with the Intervention

as the principal Conservative figure. Almonte had fought in the Texas campaign of 1835–6 and had been Minister of War in 1839–41 and again early in 1846. His intention was to use the Intervention as the basis for the construction of a Conservative régime. Napoleon III's Secret Instructions to Marshall Forey on 3 July 1862, however, favoured a moderate regime of talents from all factions. The French occupation of Mexico City in June 1863 obliged the Juárez administration to regroup in San Luis Potosí. French and Mexican Imperial forces pushed outwards to control all the principal cities and ports from the summer of 1863 until the autumn of 1866, when their military position began to collapse rapidly. The French government had grossly underestimated the difficulties in conquering Mexico. For political and financial reasons, Napoleon III had sent only an expeditionary force of some 27,000 men, one-tenth the number Napoleon I had put into the Spanish peninsula to subject a country half the size of Mexico. These included soldiers of the French Foreign Legion and auxiliaries from North Africa. The remnants of the Conservative army supplemented them, and subsequently Belgian and Austrian volunteers arrived. Even so, Imperial forces were never able to hold down the countryside for any length of time, and exposed cities changed hands on several occasions.

The Mexican imperial throne had been ominously vacant since the fall of Agustín I in March 1823. Maximilian, with the support of his wife, Carlota, daughter of Leopold I of the Belgians, agreed to be persuaded by Mexican Conservatives and monarchists that he could become the saviour of their country. A Regency Council, initially dominated by Almonte and Labastida, sought to establish its authority until the Imperial couple arrived. The French military commander, Achille Bazaine (1811–88), however,

increasingly pushed the Regents to one side, in pursuit of Napoleon III's confidential policy of marginalizing the Conservatives and preparing the way for a moderate régime taking support from anyone willing to rally to the Empire. Bazaine had gained his military experience in Algeria, Spain during the first Carlist War of 1833–40, the Crimean War (1854–6), and the Franco-Austrian war in Italy in 1859. He would assiduously apply this wide experience to the Mexican context, where irregular warfare would become a characteristic form of combat.

Maximilian and Carlota did not arrive in Mexico until June 1864, when the defeat of the Confederate Army was approaching. Although France had never recognized the Confederacy, Napoleon III's strategy in Mexico had been predicated upon the continuation of the armed struggle in the United States. Once Imperial forces had reached the Texas border late in 1864, relations with the Confederate authorities were cordial, especially as the Confederacy depended upon Matamoros to circumvent the Union blockade as its point of exit for the cotton crop. In the meantime, however, Juárez's Minister in Washington, Matías Romero (1837–98), worked unceasingly to mobilize US public opinion against the Second Mexican Empire. The US Government, however, even after the defeat of the Confederacy in 1865, continued to attach greater priority to its relations with France than to Republican Mexico. Accordingly, it never gave material support to the *juarista* cause. Arms crossed the border in private transactions, but neither France nor the USA risked a breach in relations over the Mexican issue.

During the War of the Intervention (1862–7), Juárez never abandoned national territory. He regarded himself as the personal embodiment of the Republic – perpetually itinerant but never forced out of the country.

Although holding out in El Paso del Norte (later Ciudad Juárez) on the Río Bravo in 1865–6, Juárez and his two accompanying ministers, Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada (1823–89) and José María Iglesias (1823–91), never abandoned the belief that defence of national sovereignty required their continued presence, in spite of the hardships involved, on Mexican soil. In such a way, they prevented the Imperial Government from claiming that it alone represented the legitimate government of Mexico. In spite of notable defections from the republican camp, Juárez could count on the support of a series of northern and western state governors, ranging from Coahuila to Michoacán. The most significant of these was Luis Terrazas in Chihuahua, where Juárez spent the greater part of his internal exile in 1864–6. Terrazas began his rise to local dominance in the political and economic life of Chihuahua in this period. Through such political and military alliances in the north, Juárez was able to break the power of Vidaurri and occupy Monterrey in 1864.

Maximilian's government suffered at the outset from an ambivalence of policy. He had been brought to Mexico by the Conservatives, but tended to liberal views himself. He rapidly alienated the ecclesiastical hierarchy because of his Habsburg belief in the supremacy of state over Church and in his support for religious toleration. He refused to sanction the nullification of the disamortization laws of 1856 and 1859 with regard to ecclesiastical properties and sought, instead, to rally purchasers of nationalized properties to the Empire. Imperial policy alienated Pope Pius IX (1846–78), who had condemned the Mexican Reform.

Plate 5.9



(a) The Emperor Maximilian.



(b) The Empress Carlota.

There is an extraordinary quantity of photos and paintings of the Imperial couple, a desperate attempt to propagate their image as widely as possible in an increasingly adverse environment. Paintings of the Emperor and Empress in imperial robes may be seen in the Museum of History at Chapultepec Castle, a complete contrast to the sober dress of the Republican leaders

(By kind permission of the Roberto Mayer Collection, Mexico City)

Laws led to the prompt withdrawal of the Papal Nuncio, and frustrated the signature of a Concordat between Church and state. Financial disarray provided a further cause of the Empire's collapse. The Treaty of Miramar between Napoleon III and Maximilian on 23 March 1864 obliged Mexico, its financial situation already the pretext for the initial European intervention, to pay the cost of the French enterprise. As a result, the

Imperial government constantly sought financial assistance from European banking houses, including Barings of London.

Maximilian excluded the Conservative Party from office. Out of power as a group since the end of December 1860, Conservatives did not predominate in government again until late in 1866, when the Empire was near collapse. Instead, Maximilian placed the administration in the hands of known moderates and liberals disposed to cooperate with a reforming Empire. The three principal Conservative figures, Almonte, Miramón, and Márquez, were all sent to Europe. Miramón, an ex-President (1860), clearly had national political ambitions and as such posed a potential threat to the Empire. Márquez had an unsavory reputation as a result of the murder of Liberal prisoners and medical workers at Tacubaya in 1859. Miramón and Márquez were not recalled until the end of 1866, when French military withdrawal was already in process. From late 1864 until late 1866, Mejía, who had no national-level political ambitions, became, in effect, the principal Mexican Imperial commander in the field.

From the beginning, Maximilian sought to distance his government from the actions of the French military – upon whose success his survival depended. The Emperor's intention was to sponsor the creation of an autonomous Mexican Imperial Army, which he hoped initially to achieve through the efforts of his Austrian and Belgian volunteers. French hostility, followed by complete withdrawal by February 1867, forced him to rely principally on Miramón, Márquez, and Mejía. Increasing costs, political dangers in Europe, domestic opposition, and opposition from the US government contributed to the French decision to abort the Intervention. Although Bazaine's expeditionary force was not actually defeated in Mexico, withdrawal acknowledged the impossibility of effective occupation

beyond the principal cities. Napoleon III, who had hoped for a cheap and rapid victory, was not prepared to pay the political and military costs of an effective campaign of pacification. Bazaine, however, failed to persuade Maximilian to leave Mexico with the retreating French armies. Abandoning the original idea of a liberal monarchy, Maximilian realigned with Conservatives to prepare for a last stand.

The principal Liberal commanders, Mariano Escobedo (1826–1902) in the north and Porfirio Díaz (1830–1915) in the south-east, achieved the final victory over the Empire by the capture of Querétaro and Mexico City respectively in May and June 1867. Juárez was determined to bring Maximilian, Miramón, and Mejía, taken prisoner in Querétaro, to trial by court-martial under the severe provisions of the law of 25 January 1862. Although the defence counsel appealed for a civil trial in accordance with the Constitution, the three prisoners were executed by firing squad early on 19 June 1867 on the Hill of the Bells outside Querétaro. The execution was intended to be a powerful deterrent to European monarchies which sought to intervene in the affairs of American republics. The symbolism of an Austrian Habsburg, descendant of the Emperor Charles V, put to death on a hill in central Mexico by a squad of dark *mestizo* soldiers was lost on no one. A less well-known point was that Juárez's code name in the masonic organisation, which he joined in January 1847 in Mexico City while a Oaxaca deputy to the National Congress during the War with the United States, was William Tell. Mexican republicans portrayed the defeat of the Empire as a vindication of the national independence seized from Spain in 1821. It represented the survival of Mexico (in its post-1853 territorial form) as a sovereign state and at the same time sent a powerful signal to the United States to attempt no further dismemberment of national territory.

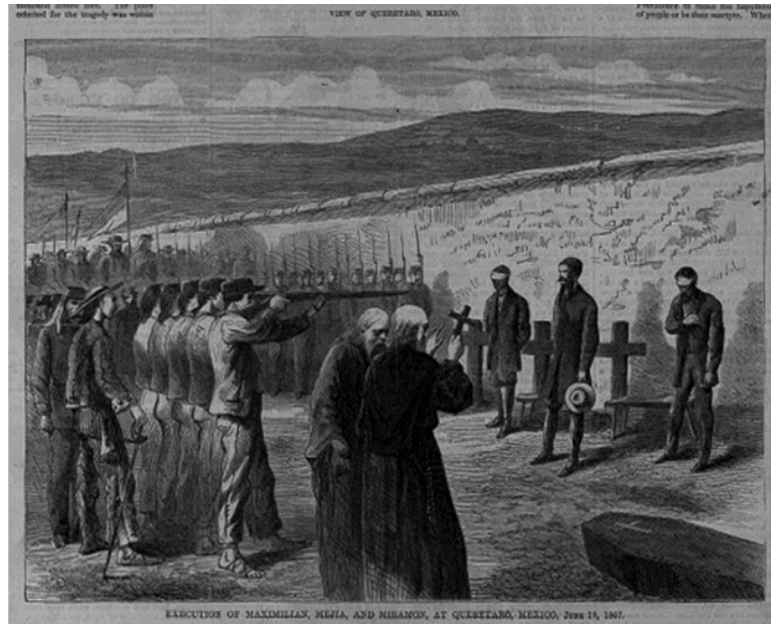


Plate 5.10 The Execution of Maximilian, Mejía, and Miramón at Querétaro, 19 June 1867. There are a number of depictions of this scene, including three paintings by Édouard Manet. This image portrays a recreated version of the execution, although with little attention to the known physical features of the three men. The strength of the image lies in the drama of the scene. A chapel, paid for by the Austro-Hungarian Government, commemorates this event. A huge statue of Juárez dominates the Hill of the Bells. The Empress Carlota, who left for Europe in 1866 to rally support for the ailing Mexican Empire, lost her reason. She finally died in Belgium in 1927

(Photo by CORBIS. Getty Images)

Juárez, a cunning and ruthless politician who knew how to wait, had survived every intrigue to bring him down and had played the central role in resisting the Intervention and Empire. In shifting alliances with Liberal state governors and political figures who spanned the range of the party from moderate to radical, Juárez had been able to deal with each of the enemies

in turn. The consistent support of leading army commanders, most prominent of whom were Escobedo and Díaz, enabled Juárez to deliver the final blow to the Empire during the first half of 1867. Thereafter, the Conservative Party was ruined as a political force in Mexico; however, much in this party's history over the period 1848–67 still remains unexplained. No Catholic-oriented party-gained electoral credibility again until the National Catholic Party of 1911–13. This meant that Mexico's future would lie in the hands of the triumphant Liberals, determined after 1867 to give the Reform Laws full effect. The victory of 1867, however, represented more the triumph of nationalism than the secure establishment of a constitutional system. As the administrations of the Restored Republic (1867–76) quickly discovered, the war years exacerbated the tensions between executive and legislative branches, and between centre and regions. Local and sub-regional poles of power, which had emerged during the fighting, challenged central-government Liberalism and sought to defend a provincial and popular-based interpretation of the Reform struggle. Juárez and Lerdo, anxious to strengthen central power by reforming the Constitution in August 1867, found themselves faced with deep suspicion and widespread opposition. Long-lasting divisions within the Liberal camp ultimately undermined attempts to establish solidly the constitutional provisions of 1857.

6

Reconstruction, 1867–1940



Several decades ago, US economist Clark Reynolds argued for three periods of rapid economic growth in modern Mexico: 1770–95; 1880–1907; 1946–70. In the first of these, capital was generated within the economy of New Spain and investment was made primarily by Spanish peninsular merchant-financiers resident in Mexico. During the second period, foreign investment played a decisive role in stimulating growth, particularly in the export sector. The final period was, as we shall see in the following chapter, the product of a post-revolutionary political economy, in which the Mexican state fulfilled an enhanced role. From the 1880s, the Mexican economy (and the Latin American economies, in general) became more closely integrated into the international system in which the principal dynamic lay in the industrialized and rapidly industrializing countries of Northern Europe and the United States. The demand for industrial raw materials and tropical produce provided powerful incentives to overseas investment. Accordingly, the recipient countries were faced with the urgent necessity of bringing their inadequate infrastructure up to date by modernizing their port,

transportation, and banking facilities. These pressures, in turn, pointed to the necessity of political stabilization at home.

The aftermath of the Reform era shaped the economic structure of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Mexico. Although considerable industrial advance took place in the years from 1880 to 1910, Mexico by 1940 still remained predominantly rural. Even so, profound social changes were set in motion, which would ultimately alter the distribution of population between town and country. It can be argued that the cost of certain sectors of the Mexican economy participating in the late nineteenth-century capitalist world was a decline in popular living standards. In areas of particular social dislocation, rural rebellion broke out and banditry was rife. One of the most notorious bandits, Heraclio Bernal, operated across the mining zones of the Sierra Madre Occidental during the 1880s. The social impact of closer integration into the world market became a major issue during the Mexican Revolution after 1910, as it would again with the adoption of 'neo-liberal' economic policies from the mid-1980s.

In the period from 1880 until the wide-ranging impact of the recession of 1907, the Mexican economy expanded particularly in three areas: diversification of the mining sector, development of tropical produce for export, and the capture of the home market by a series of national industries with textiles in the lead. At the same time, however, Mexican population growth from 9.7 to 15.1 million inhabitants between 1877 and 1910 placed fresh burdens on an inadequate agrarian structure. Despite striking advances in the industrial sectors of the economy, at least 64 per cent of the working population was still engaged in agriculture by 1910. The proportion had, in fact, increased from 60 per cent in 1877. Furthermore, the high illiteracy

rate of 77 per cent of the total population impeded the application of technology and the transfer to skilled labour.

Serious political failures at the national level during the 1890s and 1900s ensured that Mexico by 1910–11 found itself in a revolutionary situation. Political division in the national government left the precarious structures of the régime dangerously exposed to popular mobilization at all levels. The celebrations for the centenary of Independence provided the façade behind which political failure and social dislocation remained at least partially hidden from view. Failure to resolve the succession question throughout the 1900s provided the immediate cause for political disintegration which began within the Díaz regime itself.

Mexico lost a million people during the revolutionary conflicts of the 1910s. The dislocation of supply lines and persistent military requisitioning produced a major food crisis by 1914–15. In June 1915, there were food riots in the capital, which presented a scene of malnutrition and starvation. Maize production fell considerably below 1900–10 levels by 1918, and bean production reached only 60 per cent of the 1910 figure. In 1918–19, only 12 per cent of mines and 21 per cent of processing plants were operating. Food prices continued to rise through 1920, while wage levels remained the same as in 1910. Worse still, silver and copper prices continued to fall on the world market. Mexico's booming oil industry, largely untouched by revolutionary fighting due to its remote geographical locations on the Gulf coast and Isthmus, proved to be the country's main export earner during that period of contraction and hardship.

The problem of resolving the question of food supply would be left for the revolutionary governments after 1920. Large-scale peasant mobilization during the Revolution, however, ensured that the issue of landownership

would also have to be dealt with by them. During the 1930s, the Mexican Revolution faced the problem of reconciling the need to maximize food supply with demand for land redistribution to the peasantry. Accordingly, the Revolution generated parallel issues such as labour organization within the peasant sector and government credit supply to reconstituted communities. This brought to the forefront the question of the relationship of organized peasant producers to the post-revolutionary political processes.

Reconstruction proved to be a process of long duration. It did not come to fruition until after the mid-1940s, when Mexico experienced three decades of rapid growth. During the course of those decades, the country became predominantly urban for the first time. Economic growth during the Díaz period laid many of the foundations for this subsequent expansion. In many respects, the immediate impact of the Revolution over the period from 1910 to 1940 halted economic growth or even pushed the country backwards into the cycle of violence and turmoil. At the same time, however, the social and political changes imposed by the Revolution released energies hitherto contained and created conditions ultimately more favourable to renewed economic growth. During the 1940s, as we shall see in the following chapter, internal and international conditions combined to enable Mexico to embark on a leap forward that has been described as the ‘Mexican miracle’.

Part One: The Liberal Republic: Constitutionalism or Personal Rule, 1867–1911?

The triumph of the Liberal Reform movement in 1867 brought about a flourishing of Mexican nationalism in official circles. Ignacio Altamirano (1834–93), in particular, appealed for the development of a distinct national literature in reaction to predominant European models. It remained unclear how this would come about, especially as the leading literary innovators continued to be Europeans at least into the last decades of the century. Cultural nationalism remained a series of confused reactions to foreign models among a small group of literary figures struggling with the limitations of their home culture but unable to discover what might define a predominantly ‘Mexican’ expression. Even so, Altamirano led the way in 1869 with the establishment of the literary newspaper, *El Renacimiento*, which sought to revive national creativity after the war years by bringing together talent from whatever ideological persuasion. A radical Liberal of indigenous origin, born in Tixtla (Guerrero), Altamirano was also a novelist, whose *Clemencia* (1869) has been regarded as one of the first modern Mexican novels. José María Velasco (1840–1912), Mexico's foremost landscape painter, adapted the European tradition to a specifically Mexican environment, vaster and more dramatic. From 1855, he studied at the late-colonial Academia de San Carlos in Mexico City (which became the National School of Fine Arts after 1867), and was a pupil of the Italian painter, Eugenio Landesio, resident in Mexico until 1897. From 1865, Velasco studied Natural Science at the Academy of Medicine, Botany, Physics, and Zoology. From the 1870s into the 1890s, Velasco painted

scenes mainly in the Valley of Mexico, which included depictions of the first railways. Diego Rivera was one of Velasco's pupils and regarded him as a principal influence. The other was José Guadalupe Posada (1852–1913), whose lithographs took up the traditional theme of the Day of the Dead (2 November) and portrayed the mocking omnipresence of death through his satires with skulls and skeletons. Posada became a leading critic of the late Díaz-era plutocracy.

Juárez had always emphasised the necessity of state education, but government finances were inadequate to the task during the 1860s and 1870s. The ten-year struggle between Liberals and Conservatives delayed the projected educational reforms. The National Preparatory School finally opened early in 1868. Rivera in 1921–2 would paint his first murals on its walls. Gabino Barreda (1818–81), for twelve years its first director, introduced a Mexicanised version of French positivism after 1867, which stressed the importance of scientific and practical education over religion and the traditional disciplines to which Liberal thinkers attributed the country's backwardness. In his view, Mexican history consisted of three phases, the religious (the Spanish colonial era), the metaphysical (the Liberal Reform movement), and the positive (the forthcoming era of peace and progress). Although the education share of the national budget doubled to just under 7 per cent of the total between 1877–8 and 1910–11, the allocation for the armed forces and police stood at 22 per cent (though having fallen from 42 per cent).



Plate 6.1 Citlalepetl volcano with steam-train in the foreground, 1878. The Veracruz to Mexico City line was surveyed from 1856. However, ten years of civil war followed. The line was completed in December 1872 and inaugurated on 1 January 1873. The bridge over the Metlac Gorge was 84 feet high and stood on nine cast-iron columns. The renowned landscape painter, José María Velasco's, made a number of well-known paintings of this bridge. The large oil on canvas painting in the Museum of Modern Art (Mexico City), showing the Orizaba volcano in the background, is a studio copy made in 1897 of an earlier on-site view

(DeAgostini Picture Library, Getty Images)

The Expansion of the Economy

The attempted reconstruction of the economy began in the aftermath of the collapse of the Second Empire. Although no diplomatic relations existed between Mexico and Great Britain from 1867 to 1884, the Juárez Government in 1870 recognized a total British debt of 66.5 million pesos, which would somehow have to be serviced. At the same time, the country experienced a continual shortage of circulating medium: in 1870 estimates of minted coinage totalled 24 million pesos, but 21–23 million was exported, in order to pay for imports. This problem curbed domestic purchasing power and held back national industries. Romero, Secretary of Finance in 1872–3, estimated a budget deficit of 7.2 million pesos for the financial year, with revenues at only 15.9 million pesos.

The Restored Republic (1867–76), beset by internal conflict over the relationship between centre and regions, executive and legislative branches, and civil and military power, largely failed to stabilize the economy. By 1880, Mexico faced a range of economic obstacles: how to reduce traditional reliance on the export of precious metals at a time of falling silver prices and diversify mineral production; how to stimulate home industrial production; how to open up new geographical areas of production; how to reduce annual budget deficits and the adverse balance of trade; how to service the substantial external debt; how to fund a broadly based educational system capable of raising literacy levels and providing a skilled labour force. In 1883–4, the administration of Manuel González (1880–4) attempted unsuccessfully to renegotiate the external debt and restore Mexico's creditworthiness. This was brought to fruition by Finance

Minister Manuel Dublán (1830–91), brother-in-law of Juárez, during the period 1884–8. Following the restoration of relations with Great Britain, Mexico negotiated in 1885 the conversion of the debt, which would be serviced by the newly founded Banco Nacional de México with deposits from the Veracruz customs-house. Agreement with the London bondholders followed in 1885, along with a loan of £10.5 million from the German House of Bleichröder. Finally, in 1888, the issue of new bonds signalled Mexico's return to the international credit market. A second German loan followed in 1890 for £6 million.

Accelerated economic growth after c. 1880 had far-reaching social and political repercussions. Not the least of these was the rapidly increasing importance of the northern states from Sonora across to Nuevo León, where the rise of Monterrey coincided with the governorship of General Bernardo Reyes (1885–1909). The development of a railroad network from the 1880s not only contributed to the integration of a national market for the first time, but also assisted government attempts to control the full span of national territory. The total railroad length grew from only 472km to 19,205km between 1873 and 1910, with 1882 as the peak year of expansion. After 1880, the Mexican railroad system was linked to the US network through El Paso. The growth of the railroad system led to concessions to development companies and expanded labour opportunities. At the same time, however, rising land values put pressure on peasant properties located near the proposed lines and provoked considerable rural unrest behind the façade of development. Railroad expansion profoundly affected the whole economy and contributed to the growth of Gross National Product in the period between 1895 and 1910. Government recognition of the importance of the infrastructure led to the establishment of a separate Ministry of

Communications and Public Works in 1891, located in a magnificent building opposite the colonial Mining College at the edge of the old city centre. The crucial role of the railways raised the question of ownership, which became a major political issue in the late 1900s.

Under General Carlos Pacheco (b. Chihuahua 1839), veteran of the Wars of Reform and Intervention and the 1876 rebellion, railway development was pushed ahead. Pacheco, Secretary for Development from 1881 to 1891, laid the foundations for nearly three decades of economic development. The expansion of the railroad system from the centre core to the US border opened new areas of raw-material supply. This proved to be of decisive importance with regard to cotton production for the struggling national textile industry. Until the 1870s the Veracruz Gulf and Pacific coastal zones still remained the principal areas of supply, just as they had been in the colonial era. The building of the Central Railroad in the 1880s, however, opened the La Laguna zone across the States of Durango and Coahuila. Irrigated by the Río Nazas, this zone consisted of 6,000km of cotton lands. Poor share-croppers lost their flood-plain maize lands to the cotton planters. In 1888, a joint-stock company, the Tlahualillo Company, bought up 44,000 hectares and promptly ran into conflict with local landowners over the water supply. La Laguna became the fastest growing agricultural zone in Mexico between 1888 and 1895. The rural population increased tenfold to 200,000 between 1880 and 1910, mostly due to migration from central Mexico. The labour situation in the La Laguna area contributed to mass support for the Revolution in 1910.

Rapidly increasing cotton production reduced Mexico's reliance on imported fibre: raw cotton fell as a proportion of primary imports from 45 per cent in 1888–9 to 22 per cent by 1910–11. A parallel expansion took

place in national textile production, particularly during the 1890s, as a result of heavy Mexican and foreign-resident investment. Industrialization contributed to urbanization: Mexico City, Puebla, Guadalajara, all traditional textile centres grew considerably, although the most striking growth took place in Orizaba (Veracruz) and Monterrey, which was linked by rail to La Laguna. Torreón, the La Laguna principal town and also a metallurgical centre, rose from 2,000 to 34,200 inhabitants in the twenty years before 1910. The estimated number of textile artisans in Mexico fell from 41,000 in 1895 to 8,000 by 1910, while the number of industrial workers rose from 19,000 to 36,000. In other industrial activities, however, artisan production remained largely unaffected.

Expansion emphasized all the more the necessity of importing technology from north-west Europe or the USA in response to domestic demand. This, however, proved to be expensive at a time of declining values of silver exports. Accordingly, the preferred method of increasing textile production tended to be by an increase in manpower rather than through the adoption of new technologies. Although by 1910–11, 9 per cent of Mexican imports consisted of machinery and the proportion of imported cotton fell from 31.5 per cent in 1888–9 to only 2.8 per cent, productivity remained largely static. Skilled labour, furthermore, continued to be at a premium in view of the general lack of educational facilities for the working man and woman.

The rapid growth of the mining sector further underlined the economic importance of the northern states, which according to François-Xavier Guerra accounted for 75 per cent of mine production. Investment rose from 1.75 million pesos in 1892 to 156 million pesos by 1907, when the industry was struck by recession. A large part of that investment was foreign by

origin. Mexico's traditional export, silver, was badly affected by declining world values, which halved between 1877 and 1903. International demand for Mexican silver as a medium of exchange fell as the principal countries went over to the gold standard after 1873. Precious metal exports, however, still expanded: from 25 million pesos to 81 million pesos between 1877 and 1910. Even so, industrial and combustible metal production grew from the early 1890s, with the result that by 1910–11 precious metals represented only 54 per cent of the value of mining production. Mining centres moved continually northwards until by the end of the Díaz period Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí, Sonora, and Coahuila were the predominant zones.

The rise of Monterrey as the major commercial and industrial centre of the north-east (1,000km from Mexico City) was linked to the expansion of the US economy in the post-Civil War era. As in the rest of Mexico, merchant-financiers, many of them foreign-born, supplied the capital. One of the most prominent was Isaac Garza (b. Monterrey 1853), who married into the Sada family and headed the city's most important business connection. The Garza Sada family dominated the beer industry, which forced out foreign competition during the 1890s, and consolidated the three great breweries in the 1920s. Two decades earlier, the glass industry passed from Puebla and Mexico City to Monterrey, where there had been no previous tradition. The family opened the *Vidriera Monterrey* SA factory in 1909, which had a basic capital of \$1.2 million and began production in the following year. The glass factory was situated close to the *Cervecería Cuauhtémoc*. The first steel mill in Latin America, Fundidora Monterrey, began production in 1903, again under Garza control. However, the blast furnace never ran to more than 50 per cent of its production capacity for any two consecutive years in the decades before 1929. It took until the late

1930s for the *Fundidora* to produce to 80 per cent capacity for the first time.

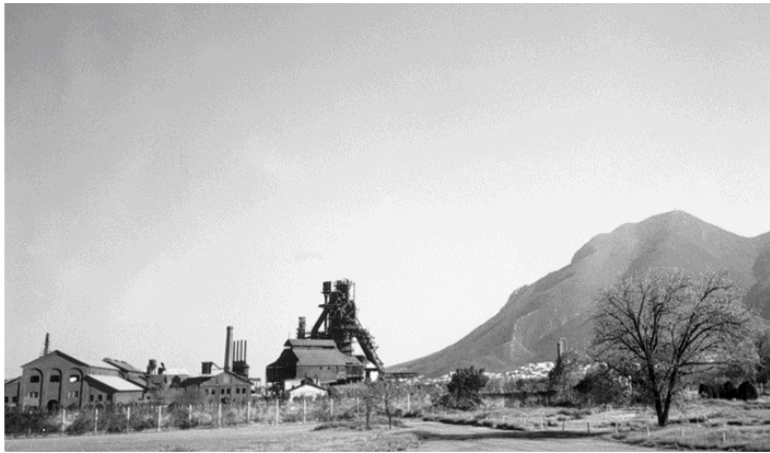


Plate 6.2 The Monterrey Iron and Steel Plant of 1903. The *Compañía Fundidora de Fierro y Acero de Monterrey* began operating in 1903. Established in 1900 with Mexican and foreign-resident capital, the plant contributed significantly to the rapid industrialisation of this north-eastern city from the late 1880s onward. Three textile factories, founded in 1854, 1872, and 1874, already operated in and around the city. The Monterrey brewery opened in 1890; cement and glassware followed iron and steel in 1905 and 1909. Coal deposits were located to the north of the city and across the Coahuila border, notably in Piedras Negras on the Rio Grande. The *Fundidora* now forms the centrepiece of an industrial park, with Saddle Mountain (Cerro de la Silla) in the background

(Author's photo)

Three finance ministers, Romero, Dublán, and José Yves Limantour (1854–1935) contributed to the final stabilization of Mexican finances. Limantour succeeded Romero at the Secretariat of Finance in May 1893. In the financial year 1895–6, he managed to produce a budget surplus with

revenues at 50.5 million pesos and expenditure at 40 million. This remarkable achievement was sustained right through to 1905–6. Trade figures for 1904–5 also showed a favourable balance, with metals comprising half the exports. In the monetary reform of 1905, however, Limantour put Mexico on the gold standard, reflecting ten years of fiscal stability and with the intention of claiming a place for the Republic among the leading countries of the world. As a result, the terms of trade deteriorated when export prices fell and the price of imports, particularly machinery, rose. In that context, the impact of the New York stock market collapse of 1907 bit deeply into the modernized sectors of the Mexican economy exposed to international price trends. The disastrous harvest of the same year increased social deprivation. Although food production recovered in 1908 and 1909, those two years proved to be disastrous for Mexican industry. Limantour was obliged to ride through the crisis by securing another foreign loan.

During the Díaz period, Mexico's foreign and internal debt rapidly increased, particularly after 1890. Debt rose from 193.2 million pesos in 1896 to 589.7 million pesos by 1911, of which 441 million represented the external debt (including railway credits), even allowing for the 1905 devaluation. The bulk of the external debt was accounted for not by the purchase of military equipment (which was generally neglected), but through the cost of modernizing the infrastructure. Limantour, however, was able to reduce the cost of servicing the debt from 38 per cent of ordinary revenue in 1895–6 to 23.7 per cent by 1910–11, by the reduction of interest rates through debt conversions in 1899 and 1910. International confidence in Mexico remained high and the level of debt continued to be

manageable. The total of direct investments, furthermore, far exceeded the sum of the loans.

Financial stability, adversely affected by the recession of 1907, significantly deteriorated during the revolutionary conflicts of the 1910s. Although a New York loan was secured in 1911 and three issues of British bonds took place in 1913–14, Mexico in 1914 was unable to service its external debt. Political collapse and civil war during the decade undermined many of the economic advances of the period from the 1880s. By December 1919, the national debt had increased to 722 million pesos. These problems would be left for the administration of Plutarco Elías Calles (1924–8) to attempt to resolve. In many respects, Limantour's successors were the Finance Ministers of the 1920s.

Territorial Power and the Rural World

Conditions on the land were by no means uniform. Labour mobility was greater in the rapidly developing north than in the traditionalist south, where (especially in Oaxaca) the Indian peasant community still retained control of much of the land. Population increased at far higher rates across the northern tier of states, Coahuila, Durango, Sonora, Chihuahua, and Nuevo León, than elsewhere in the Republic, largely due to internal migration. In central Mexico, peasant land loss was considerable during the Díaz period but neither generalized nor consistent. Up to 20 per cent of the rural population lived on *hacienda* lands, generally the best quality land. In states such as Morelos, the rapid expansion of sugar production put heavy pressure on peasant control of land, labour, and water supplies. In northern states like San Luis Potosí, wage labour tended to replace debt servility on the land. In specific areas across the centre-north, in the states of Jalisco, Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, and Querétaro, a vigorous rural middle class emerged as ranch-owners, especially where the *hacienda* was weak or absent and the peasant community long ago superseded.

The largest concentration of land remained under the control of the Terrazas family in Chihuahua. Luis Terrazas (1829–1923) established the dynasty during the Juárez era, and remained closely linked to national government until Díaz, wary of his regional power, played on local rivalries and brought about his removal between 1884 and 1903. The Terrazas' activities ranged across livestock raising, banking, and commercial interests. By 1910, the family held fifteen properties and a total of 2 million hectares, with 500,000 head of cattle and 250,000 head of sheep. The cattle-

raising society of Chihuahua and Texas had a great deal in common. The developing middle sectors in the state of Chihuahua, however, found their aspirations blocked by the Terrazas monopoly, and looked to the political democracy and lifestyles of the United States as their model. Trans-border contact was a normal facet of daily life. Chihuahua, furthermore, was not a society of sedentary community peasants like the Mexican centre and south, but a diversified and dynamic state with a semi-industrial base. Its Indian traditions remained strong in the form of the resilient Tarahumara presence in the western sierra.

Mexican agriculture, as in the eighteenth century, continued to be exposed to repeated subsistence crises. In 1891–2, for instance, two harvests failed in succession. Worse still, food production diminished in relation to rising population in the decades before 1910. Maize production, for instance, fell from 2.7 million tons in 1877 to 2.1 million tons in 1907. As a result, the country was obliged to import grains at times of shortage, such as 1896–7, 1900–1, and particularly between 1909 and 1911, a period of repeated harvest failures. Food imports in a period of diminishing silver values further jeopardised the financial system, made precariously stable by the efforts of Limantour after 1893. Food prices rose in Mexico – by 20 per cent between 1900 and 1910 – when they were falling in much of the rest of the world. The maize price rose in the same decade from an index of 100 to 190. As in the subsistence crisis of 1809–11, regional disparities were striking. The northern mining states were among the worst affected. Inattention to the food supply fueled general inflation at a time of relatively stagnant wage-levels. Loss of village lands exacerbated the impact of subsistence crisis in the central zones.

The 'pax porfiriana' did not bring peace to the rural world. Villages in the humid Huasteca zone of San Luis Potosí attempted in 1879–83 to take back lands usurped by *haciendas* and to assert their right to municipal representation. Communities in Tepic demanded effective suffrage and free municipal elections. Similar instances appeared across the entire central zone of Mexico. Reyes, who believed that the suppression of rural resistance and bandit activity was the precondition for modernization, put down the San Luis Potosí rebellions. A later series of rebellions spread across Chihuahua and Coahuila between 1889 and 1893, originating in power struggles between rival factions, accompanied by other movements in Guerrero and Veracruz. All such rebellions, in part products of the economic difficulties of those years, remained local in character.

The recovery of the mining economy of the north-west placed renewed pressure on the Yaquis of Sonora. Indian strategies of survival during the nineteenth century had involved tactical alliances with competing political factions in the state. In effect, the Yaquis by the 1870s had managed to maintain a virtually autonomous republic based on the rich agriculture of the Yaqui River system. The advance of development companies, which aimed to seize this land, provoked a determined guerrilla warfare after 1887. State and federal government frustration led to a policy after 1895 of violent repression and the deportation of captured Yaquis to the tropical plantations of the south-east. Even so, by 1900, there were still some 30,000 Yaquis out of a total state population of 220,000 inhabitants. Yaqui resistance in 1899 and between 1902 and 1905 ensured that up to 5,000 federal troops were in the field. Deportation became general policy after 1904, rising to a peak by 1908, by which time between a quarter and a half of the Yaqui population had been sent out of the state by rail. Many went to

supplement local Maya labour on the henequen plantations of Yucatán, which were labour-intensive. Others fled across the border into Arizona. The Díaz regime portrayed the Yaquis as enemies of progress and civilization, and applied a policy of violent repression. For their part, the Yaquis denied the right of the federal government to alter their way of life and deprive them of their lands. A key role in the government's war against the Yaqui was played by Ramón Corral (1854–1912), the leading political figure in Sonora between 1887 and 1900. The crude solutions of the Díaz era contributed to Yaqui cooperation with Álvaro Obregón's revolutionary forces in Sonora after 1913. The Mexican Revolution in power was left to find a solution to the problems of the Yaquis.

Alan Knight's study of the Mexican Revolution argues strongly that 'rebellions stemming from agrarian grievances were central to the popular revolution of 1910–20'. As in the case of the background to the revolutionary movements of the 1810s, many long-standing, localised grievances filtered into the broader movement with its regional and national leadership groups. Accelerated economic change often exacerbated local problems in the decades prior to the outbreak of generalised revolt. In both cases, a political crisis at the centre opened the way for popular mobilization. There were, however, substantial qualitative differences. Conflicts over land usage, water rights, and peasant labour on haciendas assumed much greater importance in the 1910s than in the 1810s, though they were not by any means absent then. From the 1890s, land and labour questions predominated as the sources of social conflict. The immediate decades prior to the 1910 Revolution highlighted the widening gap between the modernizing sectors of the economy and traditional peasant identity.

Political Practices under Porfirio Díaz

In the rebellion of Tuxtepec, Díaz ousted Lerdo in 1876 on a platform of ‘Effective Suffrage: No Re-election’, or strict adherence to the principles of the 1857 Constitution. This stance, anticipated in all the rebellions from within the Liberal camp since 1867, endeared him to the radical wing of the movement. These radicals or ‘purists’, out of power since 1863, had been deeply suspicious of both Juárez and Lerdo. They had formed a ready clientele for the *porfirista* cause. Díaz's first administration (1876–80) reflected the varied base of support within the country and party. Romero became Finance Minister once again, the radical General Pedro Ogazón who had been Governor of Jalisco in 1857–61 became Minister of War, and the atheist Ignacio Ramírez (1818–79) held the Ministry of Justice and Ecclesiastical Affairs. It also revealed the weakness of his support at the top levels of the Liberal movement in the aftermath of the three-way split in the movement during the 1870s. The principal figure behind Díaz was his intimate friend and fellow Oaxacan, Justo Benítez (1839–1900), who had been his secretary during the War of the Intervention and chief adviser during Díaz's two rebellions in 1871 and 1876. Benítez had built up a personal following and could count on a majority of supporters in the Chamber of Deputies. The general expectation – especially in view of the 1876 principle of ‘No Re-election’ – was that Benítez would succeed Díaz in 1880. Once installed in the presidency, however, Díaz sought to free himself from the tutelage of Benítez.



Plate 6.3 Porfirio Díaz, President of Mexico (1876–80, 1884–1911). Originating from Oaxaca, like Juárez, Díaz, a mestizo, rose not through the law but through the Army. He gained a national reputation in the War of the Intervention (1862–7). He dominated Mexican political life for thirty-five years. There were seven re-elections, 1884, 1888, 1892, 1896, 1900, 1906, and 1910. Although the Federal Constitution of 1857 remained in place, Díaz used its limitations to construct an authoritarian personal rule from 1884 until obliged to resign and leave the country in May 1911 by the revolutionary movement. ‘Re-electionism’ became a central issue in the Revolution of 1910. Emilio Rabasa (1856–1930)

critically examined the regime in his highly influential, *La Constitución y la dictadura* (1912)

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Díaz needed to elicit support from all available quarters. The roots of his policy of conciliation lay in this first period. Lerdo's conflict with the Mexican Catholics was terminated by a declaration in January 1877 that the new régime would not persecute the Church. Prominent individuals of whatever previous persuasion found they could come to arrangements with the régime, though no faction, group or party was permitted to coalesce. The régime used force to crush *lerdista* movements in states such as Veracruz and Sinaloa in 1877–9. In Veracruz, Díaz's telegram to Governor Luis Mier y Terán in 1877 instructing him to put down rebellion by force resulted in the execution of nine persons without trial. This and the murder of the *caciques* of Tepic by army commanders at a prepared banquet to celebrate their submission proved to be two terrible blots on the first Díaz administration.

The forthcoming trend of the Díaz period could already be discerned in 1880, when, instead of designating Benítez or any of his ministers as successor, Díaz selected an army associate with no political credibility. Díaz, apparently, did not trust Benítez to hand back political power to him on the expiration of the presidential term in 1884. The breach with Benítez was regarded by his supporters, who thereafter called the President 'Perfidious Díaz', as a betrayal. General Manuel González had no base in the Liberal Party, as he had been a Conservative during the Civil War of the Reform. Accordingly, his position depended entirely on Díaz's favour as a

compadre. González's intervention had saved the Díaz cause during his two rebellions. The presidency of González initially augured well. The distinguished *juarista*, Ignacio Mariscal (1829–1910), was appointed Secretary of Foreign Relations – a post he would hold until his death, and Díaz himself became Minister of Development. A González loyalist, General Gerónimo Treviño (1836–1914), who had risen through the Nuevo León National Guard under Vidaurri, held the Ministry of War, sealing the alliance with the north-east, as González himself came from Matamoros (Tamaulipas).

The political transfer of 1880 was only the second peaceful transfer since Independence. Yet, this ostensibly major development was merely the façade that concealed deeper manoeuvres: Díaz's intention was that González should hand back power to him in 1884. Accordingly, Díaz left the administration in May 1881, after only six months as a minister, in order not to be too closely associated with it. The intention behind this distancing was to create the conditions to prevent any possibility that González could go beyond one term in office.

It is doubtful whether Díaz himself held a clear ideology of development. He had never been associated with the technocratic wing of Liberalism, the precursor of which had been Miguel Lerdo de Tejada. Its principal expression was during the administration of Sebastián Lerdo, with the rise of such figures as Manuel Romero Rubio (1828–95), Minister of Foreign Relations and principal cabinet figure at that time. The Romero Rubios had made their money during the Reform era in association with the radical Governor of Tamaulipas, Juan José de la Garza (1826–93), through the appropriation of ecclesiastical properties. Romero Rubio had been in the USA in political eclipse since the fall of Lerdo, but had returned to Mexico

as a Senator in 1880. Díaz, however, needed sooner or later to base his régime on those most capable of providing him with a solid foundation. The *lerdista* technocrats began to return to political life as individuals during the 1880s.

Romero Rubio, for his part, had become increasingly conservative and his family Catholic. In December 1883, Díaz, then fifty-three, married Carmen Romero Rubio, aged nineteen. Attracted to her as he evidently was, Díaz's only passion, if we are to follow the view of his later opponent José López-Portillo y Rojas, was for the possession of political power: power, it should be stressed – rather than personal wealth. Carmelita, a practising Catholic, attached herself to an ageing but virile freemason and former radical. The marriage took place in Mexico City, celebrated by the same Archbishop Labastida who had been a critic of the Reform. This extraordinary coming together of a Liberal General and a formerly exiled prelate was brought about by a half-English priest, Mgr Eulogio Gillow (1847–1922), who had received part of his education at Stonyhurst Jesuit College in Lancashire. Gillow's priestly formation had taken place in the Rome of Pius IX. He used his influence with Archbishop Labastida to secure a *modus vivendi* between Church and State. Subsequently, Gillow became Bishop and then in 1887 Archbishop of Oaxaca. In 1901, Gillow would become the first American to be nominated Cardinal, although the Mexican government refused to allow the title to be used in Mexican.

Díaz and Carmelita spent their honeymoon in the United States – Carmen was a highly skilled English-speaker – where the couple were fêted as royalty.

In the meantime, the *porfiristas* began the process of discrediting the González administration, laying against it charges of financial irregularities,

particularly regarding railway loans. Díaz was elected unopposed in the presidential elections of 1884. Even so, the campaign against González continued into 1885, when a case was made in the Chamber of Deputies against his alleged misappropriation of public funds. The threat of prosecution, which only Díaz could activate, was designed to paralyze González politically.

The Construction of Personal Rule, 1884–1911

Díaz began the construction of a dictatorship during his second presidency from 1884 to 1888. Mariscal and Pacheco retained their previous offices. Dublán took Finance, but the principal figure clearly became Romero Rubio. As Minister of the Interior, he controlled the police, supervised the state governors, and managed the federal congress. At the same time, Díaz removed González supporters from state governments in favour of loyal *porfiristas*: Teodoro Dehesa (b. Veracruz 1848) ruled his home state from 1892 to 1911; Mucio Martínez dominated Puebla; Martín González (b. Oaxaca 1839) governed Oaxaca from 1894 until 1902. One loyal *porfirista* who posed no potential threat, Colonel Próspero Cahuantzi, a local Indian, remained Governor of Tlaxcala for the entire duration of the régime, a period consequently known as the ‘Prosperato’. In Nuevo León, Reyes governed from December 1885 until November 1909. As Reyes's authority grew with his efficient administration of Nuevo León, Díaz became increasingly suspicious of him.

Guerra argues that by the mid-1880s the political system had become ‘a pyramid of old ties and loyalties of different types at the summit of which was the President’. Díaz brought together a multitude of pre-existing networks: personal loyalties at local and regional levels became the foundations of national political cohesion. Most hitherto autonomous *caciques* were replaced and all potential military rivals neutralized. Essential to régime survival was the continued working relationship between all these levels and groupings. In the early phase of the construction of this personal style of government, Díaz remained in direct

control. Díaz had a profound understanding of how Mexico functioned at its most basic levels. Mexico City-based intellectual and political figures rarely understood this.

Elections continued to be held, but loyal state governors controlled them. In 1885–6, the administration began a campaign to curb journalists. Bribery and government funding were used to silence *El Partido Liberal*, *El Observador*, and other dissenting newspapers. In June 1886, government action obliged many journalists to flee across the border to the United States, where they were put under surveillance by Mexican consulates. A pliant Congress, on 21 October 1887, authorised a one-term re-election of the President and State Governors. This provision became an amendment to articles 78 and 109 of the 1857 Constitution, but totally contradicted the spirit of the Palo Blanco revisions (21 March 1876) to the Plan of Tuxtepec. As a result, many original supporters of the Tuxtepec Rebellion went into opposition, accusing the régime in the press of violating the principle of no consecutive re-election. The post-Tuxtepec era of 1876–84 had definitively come to an end. Trinidad García de la Cadena, one of the principal opponents of the regime's tendencies, Governor of Zacatecas from 1876 to 1880 and a presidential candidate in the latter year, was assassinated when gravely ill in November 1886. The alleged motive of conspiracy further exposed the criminal potential of leading supporters of Díaz's administration. The moral responsibility was held to lie with Díaz.

Personal rivalries within the cabinet of 1884–8 prevented unity, strengthened the position of the President, and augured ill for an agreed succession in 1888. The national policy of conciliation, then, concealed a cabinet of inveterate hostilities. Díaz encouraged Romero Rubio, Dublán, and Pacheco each to think of themselves as his potential successor. These

mutual rivalries cancelled each other out. Furthermore, Romero Rubio could not bid independently for the succession, because he was Díaz's father-in-law. The result was that in 1888 Díaz stood again for re-election under the terms of the 1887 amendment. Dangerous opponents, such as General Ramón Corona, former Governor of Jalisco, and General Ignacio Martínez, editor of *El Mundo*, were both assassinated, the former in 1889 and the latter over the Texas border in Laredo in 1891. These were exceptions, as the normal practice of the régime was seduction and incorporation. Even so, those who refused to cooperate were hounded implacably.

Romero Rubio's influence remained strong. Through his private secretary, Rosendo Pineda (b. Juchitán 1855), a key figure in the régime, a circle of enterprising young men in their twenties and thirties, several of them pupils of Barrera, grouped around him as his personal clientele until his death in 1895. In general, they favoured the continuation of the dictatorship on the grounds that it guaranteed political stability and economic development. Pineda personally supervised the official newspaper, *El Imparcial*, edited by Rafael Reyes, which conducted a war of polemics against the increasingly marginalized opposition. The paper attracted intellectuals to the government side by offering them space to publish their writings. Renowned poets such as Manuel Gutiérrez Najera (1859–95) and Salvador Díaz Mirón (1853–1928) appeared there. The paper's low price undercut its rivals, which withered away.

After the second re-election in 1888, the opposition journal, *El Diario del Hogar*, founded in 1881 and edited by Filomeno Mata (1845–1911), staunch defender of freedom of the press, was persecuted by the régime. Mata himself was sent to prison thirty times. Daniel Cabrera (1858–1914),

founder of the satirical *El Hijo del Ahuizote* in August 1885, was reputedly imprisoned 300 times before the paper's expiry in 1895. The lithographs of Posada appeared in this paper after his move to Mexico City in 1887.

In 1892, the technocratic circle formed the Liberal Union, an elite faction which campaigned for the third re-election of Díaz. The principal figures were Pineda and Justo Sierra Méndez (1848–1912), former editor of *La Libertad* (1878–84), which argued for strong government and technical advance. Sierra, a critic of the 1857 Constitution, became the leading intellectual figure of the late Díaz era and Minister of Education between 1905 and 1911. The Sunday afternoon *tertulias*, best described as informal chats among like-minded individuals which could lead to both deep friendships and violent arguments, held in his house in Tacubaya, provided a meeting-place for young literary figures and job-aspirants. Limantour, son of a French immigrant speculator in nationalised ecclesiastical properties, supported the Liberal Union. Other outstanding figures were Emilio Pimentel, Governor of Oaxaca (1903–10), the banker Joaquín Casasús, Enrique Creel (b. Chihuahua 1854), banker and manufacturer of Chihuahua, son-in-law of Luis Terrazas, and owner of one of the largest fortunes in Mexico, and Pablo Macedo. They also formed part of this group.



Plate 6.4 Weetman Pearson (Lord Cowdray) at the harbour works of Veracruz in the late 1900s. Porfirio Díaz commissioned S. Pearson & Son (London), the leading engineering firm of the day, to construct the harbor installations at Mexico's principal Atlantic-oriented port. Pearson, already involved in Mexican oil exploitation, owned a house in Mexico City and personally supervised the work at Veracruz, along with his Chief Engineer, John Brody, who is also represented in these sculptures on the harbor wall on the harbour wall. Pearson was well connected to Mexico's leading political figures in the late Díaz period. He was also Liberal Member of Parliament (1895–1910) for Colchester (Essex), where his Conservative opponents described him as ‘the Member for Mexico’

(Photograph by M. A. Anipkin, 2016)

The Liberal Union was strongly based in Mexico City, especially among modernizing businessmen. In the provinces, however, the group was much weaker. Their aim was to recreate the Liberal Party as a party of state, and use the régime as an agency of reform. They envisaged, however, the reopening of the political processes, restoration of freedom of the press, judicial reform, and a limited form of democracy. The Liberal Union stood in 1892 for the rule of law, rather than the personal supremacy of the perpetual president. Instead, it encountered the obstruction of Díaz, who suspected its real intention to be the provision of a political base for Romero Rubio. Accordingly, aspirations to political reform collapsed and Díaz succeeded himself without any modification of the system. Instead of an ‘enlightened dictatorship’, trials of journalists and editors continued through the 1890s. The technical circle, known disparagingly as the ‘*científicos*’, became little more than an administrative group owing its position to Díaz's personal favor.

The third re-election opened the way for a further constitutional amendment on 20 December 1892, which removed the specification of 1887 for one re-election, and thereby restored the 1857 position, which made no reference at all to the issue of re-election. In this way, the field lay open for indefinite re-election of the President. Regime measures to stifle the press continued. In 1893–4, it was the turn of *El Demócrata* and *El Monitor Republicano*, the latter a venerable Liberal stalwart since the 1840s. In 1896, Díaz secured his fourth re-election through the assistance of the National *Porfirista* Circle. The façade of continuity, however, was belied by deepening factionalism within the régime. Hostility to the

increasingly remote circle of *científicos* led to the emergence of a rival group which formed around Reyes in the late 1890s.

The Deepening Succession Question

The Díaz regime's conspicuous failure to resolve the succession question provided the central cause of the political breakdown in Mexico by 1910. The first rumours of a Reyes candidacy circulated in 1893 and again in 1896, when Reyes briefly became a minister of state at the Secretariat of War. It appears that in 1898, Díaz considered leaving the succession to Limantour, and departed for Monterrey in December, in order to secure Reyes's compliance. Limantour's succession, however, was blocked not by Reyes but by Joaquín Baranda (b. Mérida 1840), Minister of Justice and Public Instruction, who argued erroneously that as the son of a foreigner he could not legally stand for the presidency. Díaz, accordingly, dropped the idea as potentially controversial, and stood himself – the fifth re-election. In a vain attempt to reconcile the increasing divide between factions within the regime, Díaz brought Reyes into the government as Secretary for War (1900–2). The latter began a much-needed army reform, as Díaz, through fear of an attempted coup from within the armed forces, had studiously neglected to attend to their deteriorating condition. Reyes's policies, however, aroused the suspicions of the *científicos*, who alleged that he was building a political base in order to take the succession. The removal of Reyes, brought about by the intrigues of the *científicos* and their new ally, Corral, Governor of the Federal District and a personal enemy of Reyes, ensured the termination of the army reform policy. Mexico, consequently, did not follow the other leading Latin American countries in that period in remodelling and professionalising their armed forces generally with the assistance of European military advisers. This left the federal army

perilously exposed in the event of external intervention or large-scale internal conflict.

Between 1900 and 1904, Corral moved into the centre of the regime, even though he was not a national political figure and had largely been unknown in the capital. By 1904, when he became Secretary of the Interior, Corral occupied the commanding position previously held by Romero Rubio. Corral was the *bête noire* of the *reyistas*. Reyes himself had conflicted with him, when Military Commander in the north-west in 1880–3, over conduct of the Yaqui wars in Corral's home state of Sonora. Corral, closely involved with banking and development interests, had advocated vigorous campaigns to remove these Indians, always ready to resist effectively, from occupation of the best agricultural lands in the state.

The worsening succession problem encouraged Díaz in 1904 to extend the presidential term (for one term) to six years, ending thereby in 1906. At the same time, he secured congressional amendment of the Constitution to allow for the restoration of the vice-presidential office, previously abolished in 1847. Díaz had always opposed such a measure, which was probably the work of the *científicos*, on the grounds that the traditional function of the Vice-President had been to overthrow the President. As no one could agree on a successor, Díaz stood for a sixth re-election in 1906, this time with the controversial Corral as candidate for the vice-presidency.

Between the fifth and sixth re-elections, anti-re-election clubs sprang up in the main cities. Most took their stand on strict observation of the precepts of the 1857 Constitution, adding to them the 1876 principles of effective suffrage and no re-election. At the same time, deteriorating labour relations in the most advanced sectors of the economy, copper-mining at Cananea (Sonora) and machine-produced cottons at Río Blanco (Veracruz),

resulted in bitter strikes of long duration in 1906–7. The strikes highlighted the régime's alienation of a significant sector of the industrial working population. Against such a background, the Flores Magón brothers, who were attempting to organise an opposition Liberal Party, radicalized their program by 1906 to include working-class grievances.

Failure to resolve the succession question highlighted the issue of the transfer of political power. Long uncertainty destabilized the regime at the centre, leaving provincial nuclei of power as dangerously exposed as in 1810. Immobility at the top delegitimized the régime and made revolutionary action the only means of imposing a transfer of power. It was particularly unfortunate that the removal of the Díaz regime could only take place against the background of generalized crisis, rather than by peaceful means. This meant that the transfer to open politics would take place during a period of economic and social dislocation. The social and economic conditions within the country had already been exposed during the 1900s.

At the height of his popularity in 1908–9, Reyes refused to provoke a confrontation with the regime by standing in the elections of 1910. Even so, his supporters battled in the streets with *porfiristas*. The succession question was further exacerbated by Díaz's announcement in May 1908, at the halfway point between two presidential elections, that he would in fact be standing for a seventh re-election, with Corral as his vice-presidential candidate, in spite of a newspaper declaration in the Creelman Interview three months previously that he would stand down.

The impotence of the Reyes camp led to the opening of a rival anti-re-electionist movement led by Francisco I. Madero (b. Parras, Coahuila, 1873). Madero was the grandson of Evaristo Madero (1828–1911), a major Coahuila landowner, ally of Vidaurri, former Governor of Coahuila (1880–

3), and founder of the Banco de Nuevo León. After 1889, Díaz had marginalized the Madero family in the politics of their home state in favour of pro-*científico* appointees. *Científico* predominance at national level also blocked Venustiano Carranza's attempt to secure the state governorship in 1908. Madero, in the following year, published *The Presidential Succession of 1910*, a work in which he called for constitutional democracy in Mexico. In his book, Madero identified militarism as the country's principal enemy. In this respect, he identified with the tradition of Juárez. However, the principal critics of 'militarism' in the 1900s were the *científicos*, anxious to discredit Reyes. Given the Madero family's friendship with Limantour, this stance was not surprising. It meant, however, that a considerable distance existed between *maderismo* and *reyismo*, even though both positions upheld the economic achievements of the Porfirian era and sought to advance from them. Madero took his stand on the peaceful transfer of political power between civil authorities by means of elections. This procedure had eluded Mexico for most of the nineteenth century, and the first decade of the twentieth century was proving to be no different.

The prospect of a seventh re-election of General Díaz, who would thereby complete his eighth term in 1914, flew in the face of these aspirations to resolve the issue of the transfer of power. Madero founded the anti-re-electionist Central Club in May 1909. Mata, the frequently imprisoned journalist, became secretary, and José Vasconcelos (1882–1959), a member of the literary circle grouped together in the *Ateneo de la Juventud*, and Luis Cabrera (1876–1954), a journalist writing for *El Diario del Hogar*, nephew of Daniel Cabrera, were founding members. They would subsequently gain national prominence during the Revolution. The regime's decision to eliminate Reyes from the political scene obliged

reyistas reluctantly to realign behind Madero. Carranza was among them. In November 1909, already stripped of his military authority, Reyes resigned the governorship of Nuevo León and was sent by Díaz on a military mission to Europe. The Díaz regime never took *maderismo* seriously: the *científicos* even favoured it because it was anti-*reyista*. On the eve of the presidential elections, however, the growing anti-re-electionist coalition held a Convention in Mexico City, which alarmed the government sufficiently to ban the movement early in June 1910 and have Madero arrested in Monterrey. While Madero remained in jail in San Luis Potosí for over a month, the re-election of Díaz and Corral took place.

From the perspectives of property-owners and beneficiaries of economic developments since the 1880s, instability at the centre, combined with the imminence of an armed struggle, threatened to give free rein to social grievances hitherto contained by effective political practices. A sense of alarm pervaded the elite sectors of society, that they would no longer be protected by the Díaz regime's combination of manipulation and selective repression. Accordingly, popular mobilization seemed to threaten the modernization achieved since the 1880s. Such a fear was shared right through the elite, regardless of *porfirista* or revolutionary allegiance. For that reason, the new power groups, which emerged during the 1910s, first at state levels and finally at national level, were determined to contain or subordinate popular movements, in order to preserve and extend the economic advances inherited from the discredited *porfirista* regime. For that objective, a powerful and newly reconstituted state would be required. Provincial aspirants to wealth, competing violently for power, would seek to impose a monopoly of control over this new state.

Issues and Interpretations

Between 1867 and 1884 the Mexican political system functioned in a relatively open manner. Although Conservatives and clericals as a group played no direct part in it, the various factions within the Liberal movement and the conflicting personalities at their head actively competed for influence. The press openly criticised and satirised governments, and journalists were not hounded by the official power. Two issues remained outstanding, however: the peaceful transfer of political power from one president to another, and the marked tendency of the executive at national and state levels to establish control over the electoral process. Failure to resolve these issues brought the Restored Republic to a turning point by the mid-1870s. The issue of re-election thereafter became a central issue in politics, especially when, after 1900, the personalist regime of Porfirio Díaz distinctly failed to resolve the succession question. During the period 1884–1911, it became evident that nineteenth-century Mexican Liberalism had not succeeded in providing the country with a working representative system of government. Despite reaffirmation of liberal constitutional principles and the federal structure during the Reform era, the political processes became increasingly authoritarian and centralist. Régime abuse of re-election guaranteed perpetuation in office. Re-election alone might not have led to crisis, had it not been for the closure of the political system and the régime's undermining of the institutions established in accordance with the Constitution of 1857. By 1909–11, when the crisis over re-election broke, no national institutions were capable of asserting a controlling

position or providing a stabilizing element when the régime itself broke down.

Between 1910 and 1914, the system put together by Díaz after his capture of power in 1876 collapsed. The disintegration of Mexico's political processes provided the real testament of the Díaz era. The extent of its failures would be felt during the following decades. Economic modernization and rising statistics disguised in part the subversion of the Constitution and the gradual closure of the political system. Prosperity within the sector of the élite involved in the modernization process left its members less inclined to challenge the régime on constitutional grounds. As a result, the recession of 1907, at its most severe in the advanced sectors of the economy, exposed to view a society of stunted political development and ineffective institutions.

Latin American historiography frequently lumps together the Mexican régime and those of South America as common expressions of 'oligarchic government'. Such a view, however, misses the point, which is the substantial difference between Mexico and the other principal countries of Latin America. Elsewhere, oligarchic régimes involved transfers of power between elected presidents and, on occasions, between different parties or factions. Such practices, although rarely in any sense democratic, avoided the possibility of both self-perpetuation in power and an ensuing succession crisis. In Argentina, popular organisation forced open the political processes after 1912, which resulted in the election of the principal opposition movement, the Radical Party, in 1916. Even Peru and Bolivia, which had a far weaker constitutional inheritance than Mexico, passed through the period from the mid-1880s to the 1920s without major political and social turmoil. Most of South America, furthermore, experienced a similar

economic growth to that in Mexico. The South American experience itself demonstrated that dictatorship (in the form of the Díaz régime) was not a necessary prerequisite for development.

The comparison between Mexico and the rest of Latin America reveals the transcendent consequences of the political measures adopted during the Díaz period. The experiment in representative government begun in 1855 was broken off after 1884. Imperfect and limited as it had been, the intention after 1884 was neither to reform it nor to make it work but to reduce it to nullity. Many commentators have interpreted the Díaz regime (which still remains controversial) in accordance with its own self-justifications. Apologists at the time justified the regime on the grounds that the Constitution of 1857 was unworkable, that the Mexican people were not ready for representative government – or were incapable of it altogether, that dictatorship was necessary for development, and that Juárez and Lerdo, intending to perpetuate themselves in office, laid the basis for the Díaz regime. Their other argument was that only Díaz could hold the country together. Even so, Mexico had produced many men of distinction and ability, such as Mariano Escobedo, Matías Romero, Ignacio Vallarta, Manuel Romero Rubio, Ignacio Mariscal, and Manuel Dublán, Limantour and Reyes, for instance, capable of reaching the presidency. The Díaz regime did not result either from the historic conditions of Mexico or from simple accident, but from decisions taken at the highest level. Accordingly, Mexico, which in the Reform era had been at the vanguard of Latin American political development, fell gradually back to the level of less sophisticated societies. Venezuela, for instance, experienced a style of government determined by its national-level *caudillos* such as Antonio Guzmán Blanco, Cipriano Castro, and Juan Vicente Gómez from the 1870s

to the 1930s. The Díaz experience, labelled the 'Porfiriato' by Daniel Cosío Villegas, deprived Mexicans of the few constitutional guarantees they had won since the end of the colonial era. Mexico's constitutional experiments, tentatively begun in 1808, were snuffed out. Political practice, after 1884, depended not on respect for the Constitution but on personal arrangements with General Díaz. Such procedures violated the basic precepts of constitutional impartiality which Juárez had championed.

Lack of definition remained the hallmark of the Díaz regime throughout the period from 1880 to 1900. Divisions within the Liberal party made it impossible to adopt an official ideology: they certainly ruled out the possibility of the party becoming the monopoly party of government. If anything, that alone explained the personalist course which the régime took. With hindsight the régime's interpreters, whether influenced by apologists or detractors, have ideologised it as 'modernizing', 'developmentalist', or 'positivist'. Statistics of the period from 1877 until the recession of 1907 show considerable economic expansion, but if the economy – or some sectors of it – 'modernized', the political system did not. Instead, Díaz constructed a personalist, authoritarian system – more style than substance. When this system abruptly collapsed in 1911, no alternative institutions or political tradition existed to replace it and thereby prevent the country from dissolving into chaos.

The Díaz legacy, whether viewed in economic terms or from the perspective of political culture, proved to be a defining experience for Mexico. It left its mark throughout the twentieth century. Decisions taken in the Díaz era influenced the outcome of events during and after the Revolution. What Iturbide and Santa Anna had failed to do, Díaz constructed between 1884 and 1911. In that sense, his régime represented

not a continuation of Juárez and Lerdo, but a significant departure from their path. Mexican constitutionalists were too weak and divided to prevent this from happening – or were themselves supporters of Díaz. Nevertheless, they would play a major part in bringing the régime down in 1909–11. During the intervening period, the political system was closed in a way it had not been during the Restored Republic after 1867. Senate and the Chamber of Deputies were paralyzed, the state governors brought into line stage by stage, freedom of the press broken down, and opposition politicians and journalists hounded, sometimes even to death.

The modernizing tendencies promoted by the Díaz régime have encouraged the interpretation that the origins of contemporary Mexico lie in that particular era. In an economic sense they do. In positive terms, it can be argued that the origins of contemporary Mexico lie in the Reform era with the attempt to define citizens' rights and lay the foundations for representative government. In negative terms, it could be argued that the Díaz regime laid the foundations of twentieth-century Mexican government which has demonstrated strong centralising tendencies (within a federal system), untrammelled executive supremacy, the seemingly perpetual re-election of the monopoly party, the frequent abuse of citizens' rights, the failure to develop a political culture of effective participation, and the prevalence of private deals and personal patronage. The Díaz era wiped out the gains of the Reform era and restored the culture of authoritarianism and extra-legality.

Part Two: The Revolutionary System: State Power or Democratisation, 1911– 1940?

The Impact of Revolution

In political terms, the Revolution of 1910–11 started as a constitutionalist movement within the Liberal camp. Several crucial issues, arising from the Liberal triumph in 1867, had emerged during the Restored Republic: the expansion of presidential power, the growth of centralism, and re-electionism. Equally fundamental was the issue of ‘effective suffrage’, raised in 1871 and 1876. This question, with contemporary relevance, formed a central part of Madero's campaign against the dictatorship.

Maderismo, however, represented a tendency very different from that of nineteenth-century Mexican Liberalism. Its founding principle was constitutional democracy as such, no matter which party or faction won power in free elections. For *porfiristas*, who argued that dictatorship kept clericals out of power, and for the heirs of the radical liberalism of the 1850s, such an outcome threatened a capture of power at national level by organised Catholic groups. Liberals in Italy, Spain, and France in the second half of the nineteenth century would have shared that apprehension. Even though he was not himself a Catholic, Madero, ‘apostle’ of a Mexican democracy that never came into being, was prepared to accept this possibility. The assumption was that once in power Catholics would not then proceed to abolish the democracy which had brought them there. Few other revolutionaries went along with such a view. Madero's constitutionalism transcended nineteenth-century anti-clericalism. It marked a significant departure from the political polarisation of the Reform era over the subject of religion. Madero's presidency of 1911–13 reopened the political system, although on a broader basis than the previous experience

during the Restored Republic. The electoral successes of the recently formed Partido Católico Nacional (PCN) alone testified to that.

Guerra has argued that the Mexican Revolution broke out not in advanced mining centres of recent origin, such as Cananea, but in zones of contact between smaller units (mines, ranches, or villages) and the great enterprises (mining companies or *haciendas*). At such points, rapid structural transformation led to intense conflict. The key zone he identified in that respect was the State of Chihuahua, badly affected by the 1907 recession. At the same time, a second source of conflict arose from recently disputed elections, such as those in Morelos and Coahuila. In Morelos, furthermore, local peasant agriculture had already come into conflict with the expanding sugar properties. The leadership of the peasant villages was taken by Emiliano Zapata, whose family had risen to local significance with the Díaz regime in its early stages. The combination of aggressive *hacienda* expansion and a *científico*-controlled state machine in Morelos provided the explanation for revolutionary alignment.

Merchants and middlemen, such as Abraham González or Pascual Orozco, formed the official *maderista* leadership in the north. At the same time, the Madero administration made overtures to urban labour by creating a National Labour Office in December 1911, and in July 1912 legislating a national minimum wage and a six-day week with fifteen days' annual holiday. In that year the *Casa del Obrero Mundial* (House of World Workers) came into being. Its principal membership included printers, tram-drivers, railway-men, stonemasons, tailors, and shoemakers rather than from heavy industry, which remained weak in a country like Mexico. With anarcho-syndicalist antecedents, the *Casa* became a focus of worker unionization.

The murder of Madero in February 1913 ended the attempt to establish political democracy in Mexico. Venustiano Carranza (1859–1920), who as Governor of Coahuila had generally opposed Madero's objectives, declared against the counter-revolutionary regime of General Victoriano Huerta (1845–1916), central figure in the overthrow and murder of Madero, by issuing the Plan of Guadalupe on 26 March 1913. This Plan, supported by the states of Sonora and Chihuahua, made no mention of agrarian and social issues. At first, the Huerta regime (18 February 1913–15 July 1914) was welcomed by all the Great Powers, with the exception of the United States. The counter-revolutionary regime consisted of men of all talents and offered a bright prospect to domestic and foreign businessmen. There were two major problems, however: the nature of the regime's origin and the personality of its leader. The first pushed the revolutionary conflict into a renewed phase of violence.



Plate 6.5 Francisco I. Madero (1873–1913) with Revolutionary Leaders in 1911. Madero came from a leading family of Coahuila landowners, cotton-planters and businessmen with banking interests. Although infused with the desire to establish a working constitutional system in Mexico with valid elections and regular changes of government, he had no desire to upset the economic advances made during the Díaz era. His anti-re-election campaign made him by 1909–10 the principal focus of opposition to the Díaz regime. He reluctantly called for armed insurrection, on 20 November 1910, following Díaz's seventh re-election. A controversial President from November 1911 until his murder in February 1913, Madero could not prevent the escalation of revolutionary activity. He is seen here with Abraham González and Pascual Orozco either side of him, before the capture of Ciudad Juárez on 10 May 1911

(Photo from the Casasola Archive by permission of the Fototeca Nacional, Mexico)

The second presaged an early dissolution of governmental coherence. Huerta, a calculating politician, could count on the sympathies of Imperial Germany and Japan. In fact, the German Ambassador, Paul von Hintze,

even proposed military aid on condition that the Mexican government stop oil shipments to Great Britain in the event of a European war. German disillusionment rapidly surfaced: the ambassador reported to Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg that Huerta 'holds his cabinet meetings primarily in taverns and restaurants. Since no one really knows where he is, this protects him to some extent from assassination'.

The Mexican Revolution produced confused responses within the United States. Dislike of the late Díaz's regime's tendencies towards economic nationalism had led to initial sympathy with Madero. Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson's scepticism of the Madero administration's capability in face of mounting social conflict, however, led him to sympathise with the counter-revolutionaries. The extent of his complicity in the conspiracy to remove Madero has never been satisfactorily cleared up. His ambivalent conduct, nevertheless, aroused considerable anti-American feeling.



Plate 6.6 Federal soldiers on campaign against Revolutionaries, Torreón (Coahuila), 1913. The Federal Army, in contrast to the armies of other leading (and even lesser) Latin-American countries, had not been substantially reformed and modernized at the turn of the century. This left it perilously exposed to large-scale rebellions in key states such as Chihuahua and Morelos. Díaz's suspicion of army commanders, including Bernardo Reyes, explained this neglect. When the Madero revolution broke out, the army had only 14,000 combat-ready troops in a country the size of France and Spain combined. By contrast, the Italian army in the late nineteenth century consisted of some 215,000 serving soldiers

(Photo from the Casasola Archive by permission of the Fototeca Nacional, Mexico)

The overthrow of Mexico's constitutionally elected government coincided with the advent to power of Woodrow Wilson in the USA. Intending as a Democrat to depart from what he saw as the interventionist policies of his Republican predecessors, Roosevelt and Taft, Wilson

condemned the overthrow of Madero and gave his moral support to the opponents of the Huerta regime. The latter's approaches to Germany in the spring of 1914 led to a US blockade of Veracruz, designed to prevent the arrival of German arms. Confusion over the purpose of US ships off Veracruz led to an acrimonious dispute with the *Huertista* authorities there, which culminated in a US landing on 21 April. Wilson thought that he was assisting the constitutionalist opposition to Huerta by instructing US marines to occupy the port of Veracruz. However, all contending factions within Mexico united to condemn a US violation of Mexican national sovereignty. Carranza invoked Juárez's decree of 25 January 1862 against the European intervention. The US marines were fired on as they landed: nineteen were killed and seventy-two wounded. Accordingly, US ships responded by shelling Veracruz and leaving 126 Mexicans dead and ninety-five wounded. US forces finally evacuated Veracruz on 23 November, having achieved nothing more than the cleaning of the city's streets.

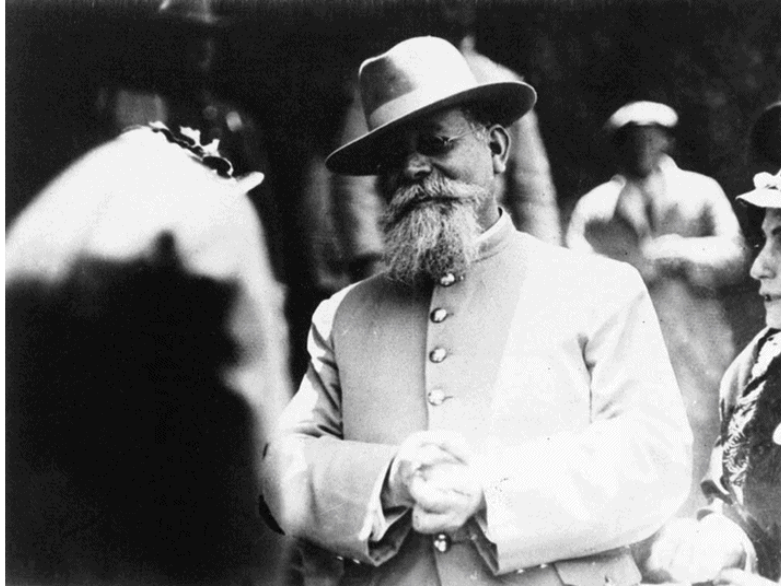


Plate 6.7 Venustiano Carranza in conversation.

Carranza, whose father had supported Juárez, originated like Madero from Coahuila. Initially a follower of Reyes, Carranza reluctantly supported Madero. Governor of Coahuila from 1911 to 1913 he became ‘First Chief’ of the Constitutionalist Revolution, following Madero's murder, although his credentials as a constitutionalist were not very strong. An opponent of Zapata and Pancho Villa, Carranza took office as President on 1 May 1917, in accordance with the Federal Constitution of the same year. He was assassinated on 21 May 1920, during the conflict with Álvaro Obregón's forces concerning the presidential succession. Carranza was more nationalist than revolutionary, particularly wary of foreign economic interests and US political pressures. After 1915, he authorised the return of lands taken from peasants under previous regimes, but labour relations deteriorated during his presidency

(Photo from the Casasola Archive by permission of the Fototeca Nacional, Mexico)

With the best intentions, President Wilson had sought to help the Mexican constitutionalists but instead found himself in an appalling mess. He strongly disliked what he had heard of Carranza, and mistrusted his German sympathies. Accordingly, Wilson backed the former bandit, Pancho Villa (1878–1923) in the struggle for power within Mexico. The defeat of Villa in 1915 made that policy redundant, especially as the war in Europe opened the prospect of German intrigues in Mexico against US interests. On 19 October, Wilson accorded recognition to Carranza. At that time, the bulk of the US army was stationed along the Mexican border.

The Struggle for Power Within the Revolution

By 1913, the original political leadership of the Revolution, which dated from 1909–10, had disintegrated. When the Huerta regime collapsed in the summer of 1914, a Mexican state at national level ceased to exist. Practical command devolved upon the chieftains operating in the field, usually at the provincial level, in much the way that it had during the insurgency of the 1810s after the capture of Morelos in 1814. In both instances, very little coordination remained. The ideological basis of these varied revolutionary movements tended to be adapted on the spot in response to social demands and political openings.

With the collapse of formal state authority and the defeat of the Federal Army, revolutionary chieftains became decisive political arbiters. At the same time, the inability of any one of them to control the full extent of national territory, at least until after 1920, created space for spontaneous popular mobilisation in pursuit of specific or localised objectives. From the beginning of the Revolution, a central issue had been the relationship between the constitutional leadership and the peasant and popular movements in the country. After 1914, the focus moved to the relationship between revolutionary chieftains and popular movements: how each of them viewed popular mobilisation, sought to use or exploit it, incorporate or neutralise it became crucial.

Resentment at foreign companies' domination of the mining sectors of the northern economy fueled an intense economic nationalism throughout the *carrancista* camp. This nationalism provided a substitute for the absence of social revolutionary objectives in the original Carranza

movement. The First Chief (as Carranza was known) and his supporters looked not to the reversal of Porfirian economic advances but to their consolidation and renewal, though without the landholding and monopolising elite, most notably the Terrazas–Creel interests. From the outset there was a striking absence of peasants, free villagers, and *hacienda* peons in the Carranza movement.

Villa, who rose for Madero in 1910–11, was a bandit by the name of Doroteo Arango, who had first emerged in the 1890s. Friedrich Katz has described Villa as ‘a complex mixture of social revolutionary and nineteenth century caudillo. His aims (at least in the regions of Chihuahua, Durango, and Coahuila, where his main interest lay) were those of a social revolutionary, though his methods of ruling were similar to those of a classic Mexican *caudillo* of the nineteenth century’. Villa established no political organization as the base for his power: he ruled his army through a complex patron–client network. From March 1913, Villa controlled the greater part of Chihuahua. For a time, his ‘División del Norte’ was the most powerful revolutionary army. The fall of Zacatecas (masterminded by Felipe Angeles) on 23 June 1914 left, 6,000 federal troops dead and sealed the fate of the Huerta counter-revolution but also confirmed the split with Carranza. At the height of his power in October 1914, Villa commanded some 40,000 men. *Hacienda* peons rather than proprietors filled the ranks of his adherents.

In many respects, the Villa movement represented a local and popular response to *hacendado* support for the Orozco rebellion of 1912 against the Madero government and the Huerta coup of 1913. As such, the objective was to break *hacendado* power in the state. In fact, Villa's land expropriation decree of 21 December 1913 excluded compensation for

landowners. Dispossessed ranchers, pushed out in the 1890s and 1900s and then hit by crop failures in 1907–9, filled *villista* ranks. Chihuahua and other northern states had many cattle estates, which could not be subdivided into small units, although former military colonists – veterans of the Apache wars of the 1880s – continued to press for land. The *villista* army itself often had to undertake food supply to towns faced with unemployment due to the recession in mining and lumber. In any case, expropriated livestock estates provided the basis for Villa's military campaigns and the revolutionary state-government managed two-thirds of them. The land was to be reserved for troops fighting, frequently outside the state, for the revolutionary movement. Villa also gained the support of La Laguna-area villagers who had lost lands to the cotton estates, and from agricultural workers facing insecure conditions on the San Luis Potosi haciendas.

The *villista* movement had a broader social base than the revolution in the centre-south led by Emiliano Zapata (1879–1919), which remained essentially a peasant-based guerrilla movement. *Zapatista* bands of some 200–300 men operated outside the planting and harvest seasons, when they returned to their villages. The movement, however, spread rapidly through the sugar zones of Morelos and southern Puebla, and had strong repercussions among the peasantry of Guerrero and Tlaxcala. By January 1913, the *zapatistas* had destroyed more than half the sugar crop of Morelos. Planters pressed urgently for a military solution in the state. They welcomed the Huerta coup, which, however, only served to escalate further the agrarian movement. By 1914–15, at the height of their power, the *zapatistas* consisted of some 20,000 men and controlled not only Morelos but also Tlaxcala, south and west Puebla, northern Guerrero, and the

southern sector of the Federal District. The *Zapatista* Plan of Ayala in 1911 and the Agrarian Law of 1915 attempted a comprehensive agrarian reform in favour of dispossessed peasant communities at the expense of the private estates. Its principal disadvantage, however, was that it addressed problems relating to heavily indigenous areas, such as Morelos, Puebla, Tlaxcala, and the State of Mexico, which were, in any case, the central areas of support. John Tutino has aptly commented that ‘backed by the most massive and widespread agrarian mobilization in Mexican history, Villa and Zapata controlled most of Mexico, occupied Mexico City, and dominated the government known as the Convention during late 1914’. At Aguascalientes, they failed, however, to agree on a lasting political solution. Accordingly, the initiative was taken from them by the coalition forming around Carranza.

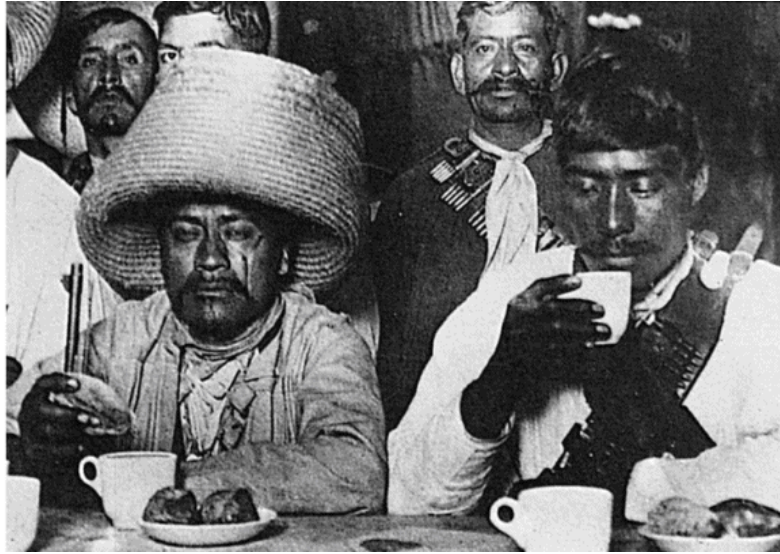


Plate 6.8 *Zapatista* forces at breakfast in Sanborn's, Mexico City, 1914. Zapata originated from the Morelos village of Anenecuilco, where his family were early Díaz supporters. Deteriorating labour conditions in his locality led to his rapid politicization. In 1909, he was elected president of the village council. Supporting the Madero Revolution, Zapata's guerrilla band took Cuautla on 19 May 1911 after bloody fighting, a significant blow to the regime in view of the town's proximity to the national capital. The *Zapatistas'* Plan of Ayala (November 1911) encapsulated fundamental rural objectives: restoration of land usurped by *haciendas*; redistribution of land among the peasants; restoration of municipal autonomy and political liberties. The *zapatistas* were driven from Mexico City by Obregón's forces in August 1915. Zapata was assassinated on 10 April 1919

(Photo from the Casasola Archive with permission from the Fototeca Nacional, Mexico)



Plate 6.9 Pancho Villa sitting in the Presidential Chair in the Presidential Palace, Mexico City, with Zapata at his side.

By 1914, Villa dominated much of northern Mexico. His forces were tactically aligned with the *zapatistas* from Morelos and together they influenced the outcome of the Convention of Aguascalientes (10 October–13 November 1914), which removed Carranza from the revolutionary leadership. They jointly occupied Mexico City on 6 December 1914, but proved unable to establish an alternative leadership. Thereafter, Obregón's army decimated *villista* forces and confined Villa to his local sphere of control. On 20 July 1923, Villa was assassinated in Parral.

Rising Sonora chieftains had already begun to put their stamp on the Carranza movement. In Sonora, the revolutionary leadership came not from peasant or worker backgrounds but from a semi-rural, semi-urban, lower middle class of hacienda-managers, shopkeepers, mill-workers, or schoolteachers, as opposed to large-scale landowners and the Porfirian elite. The revolution offered men such as Álvaro Obregón (1880–1928) and Plutarco Elías Calles (1877–1945), and their associates, Adolfo de la Huerta

(1881–1955), Benjamín Hill, Pablo González, and Salvador Alvarado the opportunity to move into commanding political positions at national level and reshape economic and social structures in their own interests. Accordingly, they did not reject the economic developments of the Porfirian era, but assumed control of them. Except in the case of oil, they were not particularly opposed to foreign investment as such and were not anxious to reduce Mexico's links to international capital. In the *carrancista* tradition they stood for a secularized society and educational system. They inherited the Jacobin-style anti-clericalism of the radical Liberals of the Reform era. Constitutionalism and agrarian social reform were not their strong points. The climax of their influence would coincide with Calles's long dominance of Mexican politics between 1924 and 1934.

The Convention of Aguascalientes of 1914 reflected the depth of division among revolutionary forces. The strength of opposition to Carranza led to the momentary alliance of *villista* and *zapatista* forces. The response from within the *carrancista* camp was the Additions to the Plan of Guadalupe, compiled by Luis Cabrera, an advocate of agrarian reform through compulsory purchase in 1912, and issued in Veracruz on 6 January 1915. These Additions modified the original platform in the light of agrarian demands evident throughout the revolutionary movement. This was a belated *carrancista* bid for peasant support. Carranza for the first time referred to the dissolution of the great estate and the restoration of village lands. A promise for the improvement of conditions of urban workers reflected Obregón's tactical alliance with them. Eight worker bands, known as the 'Red Battalions', were organised to cooperate with Obregón's forces by garrisoning towns held by Constitutionalist forces. The *Casa del Obrero Mundial* sent 7,000 members to fight with these bands in

1914–15. Urban-worker support formed an essential component in the Constitutionalist alliance against the *villistas* and *zapatistas*. For Carranza, Obregón, and Calles, however, agrarian reform was a political instrument for aligning autonomous peasant groups alongside the predominant elements within their revolutionary alliance. It was not their central objective but an instrument of manipulation and subordination.

Obregón was the principal instrument of the defeat of the popular movements. By January 1915, he already controlled Mexico City, Puebla, and Tlaxcala, pushing back the *zapatistas*. By July, he had forced them out of the Federal District altogether. *Villista* forces were routed in the two decisive battles of Celaya on 6–7 and 13 April, when Villa's cavalry charges faced the entrenched machine-gun positions of Obregón's army. The latter's victories enabled Carranza's Constitutionalist Army to secure control of Mexico City and the central political processes.

The Constitution of 1917

Taking into consideration the critique of the 1857 Constitution, the new Constitution strengthened presidential and central-government power in relation to the states. This reinforcement of the authority of the national state has tended to be overlooked in view of the attention given to the social provisions of the Constitution of 1917. Nevertheless, it is important for the explanation of executive predominance – which the 1857 Constitution had sought to avoid – throughout the rest of the twentieth century. The defeat of popular forces during 1915 left the way open for Carranza, Obregón, and Calles to reconstruct a powerful national state, focused on Presidential authority, which could take the lead in shaping the institutions of the post-revolutionary era.

Four issues preoccupied the constitutional convention of 1916–17 held in Querétaro: agrarian reform, the legal status of subsoil deposits, military–civil relations, and Church–state relations. Its deliberations should be seen against the background of the failure of the Convention of Aguascalientes. The Constitution of 1917 reflected the broad spectrum of opinion within the *carrancista* coalition. In contrast to the Russian Revolution of October 1917, an alliance of workers and peasants (led by a vanguard party, which did not exist in Mexico at that time) did not displace the predominant middle-sector leadership. The 209 deputies at Querétaro ranged from mine and textile workers to teachers, small businessmen, and landowners. As such they represented a broad cross-section of the literate male population in their thirties and forties. John Rutherford has described the descent of the revolutionary bands of rough northerners on the central heartlands of

Mexico as ‘an avalanche of khaki clothing, wide-brimmed felt hats, riding boots, revolvers and cartridge belts’ in search of plunder. There is an element of truth in that, as the northern leaders intended not only to alter the colonial-derived Hispanic and Catholic character of central Mexico but also to promote their own material interests through the control of political power.

The revolutionary situation led to a departure from the liberal principles predominating in 1857. Accordingly, the 1917 Constitution sought to respond to rural and urban labour pressures by incorporating measures for redress by positive state action. The influence of radicals, such as Francisco Múgica (1884–1954), supported by partisans of Obregón on the constitutional commission, secured the acceptance of the principle that social utility should prevail over private property. The Constitution's two high points, articles 27 and 123, eventually opened the way for far-reaching social policies. The former, the longest in the Constitution, provided for government expropriation of underutilized land in favour of smallholdings or reconstituted community properties. The Constitution gave the federal government the right to determine the maximum size of estates, in order to curb the growth of large-scale properties. At the same time, article 27 declared that all water resources and subsoil deposits (including minerals and petroleum) belonged to the national patrimony and not to the private interests in the process of exploiting them. This clause aroused the suspicions of the oil companies, which soon found themselves subject to federal taxation.

Article 123 laid down principles for improved labor conditions, should labor organisations reach a sufficient position of strength to be able to oblige government or private (often foreign-owned) corporations to put

them into effect. Between 1917 and his removal in 1920, Carranza demonstrated little willingness to do so. Nevertheless, the Constitution established a maximum working day of 8 hours (or seven at night) in a six-day week, with an obligatory week's holiday, and prohibited female and child night work in industry. The same article laid down a fixed minimum wage, instructed that due attention should be given to workers' safety, and introduced workers' insurance. Even though Article 123 recognised labor unions' right to strike, the army broke up oil workers' strikes throughout that year.

After his inauguration as constitutional President on 1 May 1917, Carranza adopted methods of government that strongly resembled those of Díaz. He sought to control congress by means of official candidates and to tame the press through government subsidies to sympathetic newspapers. In effect, constitutional guarantees did not apply to opponents of the government. The clear absence of any form of democracy opened the Carranza regime to the charge that the Madero principle of Effective Suffrage was being violated. The discord rose to a climax when Carranza, bypassing Obregón, attempted to impose a pliant successor in 1920. The nascent labor movement, which made few gains under Carranza, rallied to Obregón's opposition Plan of Agua Prieta.

Mexico as a Major Oil Producer, 1910–1925

Between 1910 and 1925, Mexico rose to the ranks of a major international oil exporter. Production had begun in 1901, and during the 1910s, US and British interests struggled to stake out their share of the industry. At first, the Díaz regime underestimated the importance of oil and the extent of Mexican resources. The regime's earlier desire to encourage foreign investment throughout the economy, however, had left the country exposed to depletion of resources and extraction of profits by foreign corporations. The issue of the legal status of subsoil deposits went back to the Mining Laws of 1884 and 1892, which granted the right of exploitation to the owner of the surface land. This principle extended to the Petroleum Law of 1901. Colonial law, however, had stipulated that subsoil deposits remained the patrimony of the Spanish state, a position inherited by the Mexican government after Independence. Company exploitation after 1884 appeared to conflict with that legal tradition. When Mexico became a major oil exporter, this issue came to a head.

Between 1901 and 1912, Mexican production increased from 10,000 barrels a year to over 12 million. Rivalry between the British-owned Mexican Eagle Company of Weetman Pearson (taken over by Royal Dutch Shell in 1919) and the US-owned Mexican Petroleum Company of the Edward Doheny firm (which passed to Standard Oil in 1925) became bitter during the later 1900s and early 1910s. The Díaz government had brought Pearson's internationally prominent engineering firm into Mexico as part of its strategy of playing off one foreign interest against another. After 1901, Pearson invested heavily in the exploration and exploitation of petroleum

deposits in the Huasteca and the Isthmus, although investors only received dividends from 1910.

The collapse of the regime, however, overtook the rivalries between the British and American companies. Both Madero and Carranza sought to uphold foreign investment in the oil industry, while at the same time defending Mexican sovereign rights to subsoil deposits as a matter of principle and denying foreign governments any right of intervention on behalf of private oil interests. Revolutionary fighting scarcely affected the oil industry, which expanded rapidly during the 1910s to reach 55 million barrels by 1917. Article 27 of the Constitution should be understood against that background. The oil interests, supported by the US government, requested Mexico to clarify its position, with regard to the companies, especially in view of Carranza's imposition of a 10 per cent production tax in April 1917. However, US entry into the European war in the same year diverted attention from the Mexican oil question.

The overthrow of Carranza in 1920 provided the US government with the weapon of non-recognition with which to force the Obregón regime into concessions. Obregón, nevertheless, managed to survive in power for three years without US recognition due to the strength of his position within the revolutionary camp. During this period, however, the uncertainty surrounding the status of the oil companies in Mexico increased. Obregón refused to negotiate recognition as long as the US government continued in its efforts to impose an unfavourable Treaty of Friendship and Commerce on Mexico. The leftist and nationalist rhetoric coming from revolutionary circles in Mexico including the government itself, most of it hot air, alarmed the US government, dominated by conservatives between 1921 and 1932, which feared the establishment of a socialist state at its back door.

The essential issue between the two governments continued to be whether Article 27 was to be applied retroactively or not. The US government, in close concert with the oil companies, withheld recognition until Mexico guaranteed the property rights of US citizens in Mexico. Although Obregón was more favourably disposed towards the oil companies than Carranza had been, it still took three years to arrive at a working arrangement. This resulted from four months of informal talks (May–August 1923), known as the Bucareli Accords. No written declaration appeared, but representatives of the two governments agreed that while Article 27 should not have retrospective effect, the US government concurred that property titles would be converted into confirmed concessions. In effect, Mexico put the nationalist dimension of the oil question on hold for the time being. As a result, diplomatic relations were renewed between the two countries on 6 September 1923. This ensured the Obregón administration US cooperation during the De la Huerta rebellion of December 1923–February 1924, which unsuccessfully challenged the succession of Calles.

By the time of the Bucareli Accords, Mexican oil production had already passed its peak in 1921 when total annual production came to 193 million barrels. At that time, oil represented 66 per cent of Mexico's external trade and accounted for just over 25 per cent of total world production. In the following year, this level fell slightly to 182 million, but thereafter the fall became sharp – to 140 million barrels in 1925 and only 50 million in 1928. Depletion of resources partly explained the fall. However, company dislike of the 1923 Accords, followed by a fresh dispute in 1925–7 over the Calles government's attempt to oblige the companies to exchange titles for fifty-year concessions diminished investor interest in Mexico.

Greater incentives appeared in the unrestrained environment of the Venezuela of Juan Vicente Gómez from the mid-1920s.

The decline of the Mexican oil industry adversely affected the Calles's administration's attempts to restore national finances and service outstanding debt obligations. The continuing decline of silver prices on the world market and the concurrent fall in copper prices compounded Mexico's adverse economic position, because along with oil those two commodities represented the country's principal exports. Overall government revenue fell 15 per cent between 1925 and 1928, that is well before the impact of the Great Depression of 1929 was felt in Mexico. In the same period, petroleum exports fell from 50 per cent of the total to 21 per cent. These trends exposed the fiscal vulnerability of the Mexican state. At the same time, the political problems generated by the Revolution did not seem anywhere near to resolution.

The Rule of the Chieftains, 1920–1934

The rising of 1920 overthrew the Carranza regime in twenty-seven days and resulted in Carranza's murder in the mountains of Puebla on 20 May 1920 while in transit to Veracruz with the national treasury and much of the civil service, in order to re-establish his government there. The Rebellion of Agua Prieta, led by Obregón, Calles, and De la Huerta, proved to be the last armed insurrection in Mexico that succeeded in capturing power. In that sense, the 1920 Rebellion drew to a close a tradition which had begun with the Plan of Iguala of 1821. Unlike Madero's rising in 1910, it did not challenge an entire political order. On the contrary, it resembled more Díaz's Rebellion of Tuxtepec in 1876 by forcing a change within the established regime, in order to give power to those impatiently waiting in the wings.

The wearing down of the institutions established under the 1857 Constitution during the Díaz era ensured that the Revolutionary Mexico of the 1910s would not witness the successful establishment of representative government and peaceful transfer of power. Instead, localised boss-rule, private networks of power, and armed political factions competed for power within or against the Revolution. Chieftains such as Carranza, Obregón, and Calles emerged at national level not radically different in style from Díaz. The Porfirian system had not displaced *caudillo*- and *cacique*-style politics, but had been constructed precisely on that base. This explained both its long duration and its collapse in 1911–14. Thereafter, power passed back into the hands of the type of chieftains who had exercised it earlier in the nineteenth century, albeit in the different social and political context of the Revolution. Accordingly, Mexico after 1915 did not face the problem simply of

reconstructing the framework of constitutional legality, violated by Díaz after 1884 and then by Huerta in 1913, but also the very distinct problem of how to make government effective throughout the breadth of national territory. Both were deeply serious problems, especially as the solutions were attempted in the 1920s and 1930s at a time of social and economic dislocation. Those attempting to find the solutions, however, were precisely the *caudillos* who had risen through the revolutionary fighting. The problem quickly became less an attempt to establish constitutional democracy than the search for some type of framework which would contain the ambitions and rivalries of the uneasy coalition of chieftains leading the victorious revolutionary movement. In all of this process, the attitude of the US government remained fundamental, as it wielded the powerful instrument of recognition or non-recognition.

During the ten years of 1918–28, the revolutionary chieftains struggled to gain control of the political organs established in accordance with the Constitution of 1917. In this power struggle, the constitutionalizing of the political processes fell by the wayside. The Madero principle of Effective Suffrage was lost among the jockeying for position within the new regime. The development of political parties, aborted during the long period of Díaz's personal rule, never matured in the decade after the promulgation of the Constitution. Furthermore, Article 130 prohibited religious-based parties, in order to prevent any recurrence of the electorally successful PCN. Carranza's Electoral Law of July 1918 increased the qualifications for parties competing in elections. This, combined with executive control of the electoral process, inhibited political diversification.

The type of party that briefly emerged was usually extemporary, a vehicle for a specific revolutionary group or for an aspiring political figure

at election time. As a result, politics generally revolved around the personalities and immediate interests of regional *caudillos* and the presidents. The *Partido Liberal Constitucionalista* had been the vehicle for the election of Carranza in 1917; it quickly passed under the control of *obregonistas*, and became the instrument for Obregón's election in September 1920. Thereafter, it evaporated. Obregón, Calles, and De la Huerta all opposed the development of party as a potential restraint to presidential power. Through the 1920s, the *caudillos* thrown up by the Revolution consolidated their hold on political life. It seemed, after all, as though not Madero but Díaz was the true founder of twentieth-century Mexican political practices.

The failure to construct a viable political party in the early years of revolutionary control of government inhibited the development of a coherent program. Presidential preoccupation with gaining and holding power meant that policy would be formulated on the spot and in response to the pressure groups jockeying for position within the regime. As a result, the revolution could not be consolidated in any consistent fashion and its leaders and factions remained vulnerable to internal division as well as opposition from without. Calles assumed control of the *Partido Laborista Mexicano*, founded in 1919, as his instrument for the elections of 1924. This party had developed in association with the Regional Confederation of Mexican Labor (CROM), established in May 1918 under the leadership of the electrician Luis Morones. The initials of the labour confederation soon came to stand for 'Cómo Robó Oro Morones' or 'How Morones Stole the Funds'.

The close collaboration of Calles and Morones characterized the administration of 1924–8. At the newly created Secretariat of Labor,

Industry, and Commerce, Morones became the second-most powerful man in Mexico. Calles maintained his own independence by playing off Morones and General Joaquín Amaro, Minister of War from 1924 to 1931. Guaranteeing the regime's survival was a tacit alliance between the army and officially organised labour, which foreshadowed other such alliances in Brazil during the 1930s and 1940s and in Argentina during the 1940s and 1950s. At the same time, the regime's priority was financial stabilization, as Mexico, which had defaulted on payment of its external debt in 1914, could not gain renewed access to international credit until that had been accomplished. In June 1922, Finance Minister De la Huerta had reached agreement in New York with the International Bankers Committee, formed in 1919, concerning renewal of debt payment. In that year, the Mexican debt stood at US\$500 million. However, he had been unable to secure either a loan or diplomatic recognition. The reconstruction of the Mexican state depended on three elements: satisfying the bankers, assuaging the oil companies, and reassuring the US government. The United States wanted a supervisory role in Mexico similar to the position it held in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua. The Mexican government, in a much stronger position than smaller Caribbean and Central American states, was determined and able to resist this.

Calles inherited Obregón's Finance Minister, Alberto Pani, who had taken office in September 1923, as the key person involved in fiscal recuperation. Once the Bucareli Accords had secured US recognition of the Obregón government, only the De la Huerta rebellion over the succession question in 1923–4 delayed resolution of the financial problem. For the Calles administration the issue between Mexico and the international bankers was financial sovereignty. The banks were prepared to loan against

security of the customs revenues, as in the nineteenth century, though with the proviso that the US government act as guarantor of any transaction. Calles's alternative was the creation of a national bank, the Bank of Mexico, under effective government control. Established on 1 September 1925, the Bank of Mexico had the sole right of note issue and gave the government unlimited access to credit. Mexican businesses and banks cooperated with the state in providing the initial funding of 57 million pesos in gold. Pani, at the end of the year, was able to negotiate a 44 per cent reduction of the external debt over the 1922 total. He resigned, however, in 1927 in protest at the overbearing influence of Morones. Although the creation of the national bank did not resolve the problem of budget deficits, the government gained an important instrument for financing its policies and held back the demands of the bankers for priority to be given to debt-servicing.

In the early years, Calles continued the agrarian reform policies in accordance with Obregón's Ejido Law of 30 December 1920, but called a halt in 1930. The Laws of April 1922 and April 1923 defined the extent of smallholdings, in accordance with availability of irrigation. Until 1934, revolutionary chieftains regarded the creation of such individual properties as their priority rather than reconstitution of peasant communal holdings, known after 1920 as *ejidos*. Calles's Law of December 1925 established the right of individual ownership of *ejidal* plots. During the first three years of Calles' administration, the Minister of Agriculture, Emilio Portes Gil (b. Ciudad Victoria 1891), Governor of Tamaulipas from 1924–8, redistributed 2.6 million hectares of land. Since problems of irrigation and credit immediately arose, the government established a National Irrigation Commission in 1925 and the Agrarian Bank in 1926.

The formation of *ejidos* had made very slow progress between 1915 and 1920, when they accounted for only 0.3 per cent of agricultural land. Measures taken between 1920 and 1934, however, extended this proportion to 13.6 per cent. That, however, was still small: it indicated the low policy priority of the *ejido* before 1934 and the importance attached by government to maximizing food production. In this sense, little was done to give effect to one of the high points of the 1917 Constitution.

The Religious Conflict

The slow pace of agrarian reform combined with opposition to Calles's religious policy to inflame popular discontent across the Catholic heartlands of the centre-north-west. The religious question, however, had many dimensions, which explained why urban middle-class Catholics, rural and small-town Catholics, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy acted in different ways. The hierarchy, profoundly affected still by the shock of the Reform movement, sought to recover lost ground by the most far-reaching process of evangelization since the sixteenth century. In the years after 1870, the Catholic Church strengthened its position in traditional heartland regions and extended its influence through the countryside. The peak period of revival took place between 1884 and 1910. The broader period from 1867 to 1917 marked the Church's greatest expansion since the missionary days of the sixteenth century, with an increased number of priests, seminaries, Catholic schools, and bishoprics.

The revolutionaries of the 1910s and 1920s encountered a revived Catholicism, which they viewed as a counter-revolutionary threat. The hierarchy regarded Mexico as an exclusively Catholic country and defined Mexican national identity in that respect. In January 1914, as the Huerta regime was fighting for its survival, the hierarchy dedicated the shrine of Cubilete in the Guanajuato sierra and proclaimed Jesus Christ to be the King of Mexico. Carrancista forces took this to be a provocation, especially as the Catholic hierarchy had made clear its view that the Mexican Revolution was a divine scourge inflicted on the country as punishment for the 1857 Constitution and the Reform Laws of 1855–60. In Monterrey in

August 1914, Constitutionalist forces responded to the idea of Christ the King of Mexico by closing all the churches and burning the confessionals in the streets.

Between 1916 and 1937 an intense conflict took place between Mexican Catholics and the revolutionary authorities. The tone of this conflict was set by anti-clerical provisions in the 1917 Constitution. These focused on education and the presence of the Church in society. Article 3 established the principle of free state education in the Juárez tradition, and banned all religious education in primary schools. Article 5 prohibited religious and monastic orders, and Article 24 banned outdoor religious ceremonies. Among its comprehensive provisions, Article 27 prohibited the ownership of landed property by religious corporations. The Archbishop of Mexico and fourteen exiled bishops protested on 14 February 1917, recalling the earlier hostility of the ecclesiastical hierarchy to the 1857 Constitution. In Jalisco, a stronghold of Catholic traditionalism, repeated conflict broke out in 1917–19.

As Governor of Sonora (1915–20), Calles in 1917 had expelled the Catholic clergy from the state. During his presidency, the crisis between Church and state deepened. Urban middle-class Catholics responded in 1925 by forming the League for the Defense of Religious Freedom, which by the following year had some 800,000 members, half of them women. Calles' Law of 1926 provided for the full application of the precepts of the Constitution, and began by closing all Catholic schools and convents. This had a similar effect to President Sebastián Lerdo's incorporation of the Reform Laws into the 1857 Constitution in 1873, which had led to the outbreak of Catholic rebellions across west-central Mexico.

By August 1926, a full-scale rebellion had broken out in the heartlands of Michoacán, Guanajuato, and Jalisco, extending by the end of the year to Zacatecas, Colima, and Querétaro. The *Cristero* Rebellion of 1926–9, so-called by self-attribution from the government's denunciation of the defenders of Christ the King, reached its peak in 1928. The Federal Army was unable to overcome the type of guerrilla tactics adopted by the *cristeros*. Like the *zapatistas* of the previous decade, the *cristero* fighters returned to their villages for the planting and harvest seasons. They represented a cross-section of rural and small-town society in the participating regions.

Alarmed at the extent of popular mobilization, the Catholic hierarchy attempted to secure its own position by coming to an arrangement with the government. This was brought about through the mediation of the US special envoy, Dwight Morrow, who was in Mexico from November 1927 to reach an accord with Calles over the oil question. The abandonment of the *cristeros* by the bishops increased existing divisions among Mexican Catholics, as the League had also maintained its distance from the popular movement. The assassination of President-elect Obregón by a Catholic reopened the succession question and threatened to break apart the carefully constructed coalition around the Obregón–Calles axis. *Obregonistas*, for instance, implicated Morones in the murder. The worsening political situation made a termination of the religious conflict imperative.

By the ‘arrangements’ of 21 June 1929, the hierarchy won a concession of freedom of Catholic worship from the government. Article 130 remained in place, and the government continued to restrict the number of priests in each state to a maximum of fifty and promote secular education. Accordingly, the conflict continued at the regional level for most

of the 1930s. After the establishment of the *modus vivendi* at the highest level, the army was then sent into the localities to root out *cristero* activists and sympathizers. Repression, however, did nothing to resolve the conflict, which passed into a second phase in 1933–7.

The Construction of the Revolutionary Party

In spite of the *maderista* principle of 1910 and the provisions of article 83 of the Constitution prohibiting presidential re-election, the Obregón–Calles group in control of the state legislated early in 1927 to allow for one sole presidential re-election at an undefined future date. Accordingly, as Calles's term of office came to an end, the issue of re-election, dormant since 1910, emerged again in the federal elections scheduled for 1 July 1928. The assassination of President-elect Obregón on 17 July threatened to blow apart the precarious revolutionary coalition.

Although Calles put the emphasis on state-building and financial reconstruction, the long-drawn-out Church–state conflicts from 1917 to 1937 weakened the new political order and undermined its legitimacy among large sectors of the population. Neglect of the principle of effective suffrage exposed the faction-ridden reality of the revolutionary coalition. The assassination of Obregón plunged Mexico into a state of permanent crisis between 1928 and 1935, made worse after 1929 by the impact of the Great Depression. The popularity of Vasconcelos's presidential campaign of 1929 – and the threat it posed to the dominant revolutionary factions – should be understood in that context. For that reason, the government remained determined to subvert to the maximum the potential of Vasconcelos, who had moved into opposition in 1923 through hatred of Calles, to deprive the revolutionary coalition of the gains it had made since 1916.

The revolutionary party did not emerge from the grass-roots. On the contrary, it resulted from hurried *ad hoc* arrangements put together by

Calles in response to the emergency. The *Partido Nacional Revolucionario* (PNR) incorporated existing state machines in return for federal government patronage. This implied the permanent subordination of state-level political leaders to the national leadership. The days of autonomous regional *caudillos* were clearly numbered. Party would increasingly predominate over personalities and regional diversities. Calles finally resolved the succession question by applying the Madero principle of 'no re-election' to all elective offices from the President and State Governors to senators, federal and state deputies, and municipal presidents. While, at the top level, this prevented recurrence of nineteenth-century abuses, the extension of this principle to the legislatures limited the development of a vibrant political life by denying deputies the benefits of congressional experience. In reality, this could only result in a strengthening of the executive branch.

The party, however, would be permanently re-elected. In this way, the Mexican Revolution brought not the constitutional democracy hoped for by Madero but increased authoritarianism, centralism, and one-party rule. The succession question, which had plagued the country since Independence, became depersonalized, but throughout the long remainder of the twentieth century the automatic succession of the official party (in spite of two subsequent changes of name) ensured that the problem of transferring power from one party to another remained unresolved.

In the early stages, the official party resembled a confederation of *caciques*. The electoral defeat of Vasconcelos, achieved by a combination of fraud and violence, ensured that there would be no alternative to the PNR as the ruling entity in Mexico. Calles, who handed over office on an interim basis to Portes Gil at the expiration of his term in December 1928, retained

effective power as the 'Jefe Máximo', or Principal Leader, of the PNR. This opened the period known as the 'Maximato', during which Calles governed from behind the scenes from 1928 until 1934 through the medium of three puppet presidents. Portes Gil, for instance, appointed Calles to the crucial office of Minister of War in March 1929.

The PNR became a bureaucratic apparatus. As such it provided a model for subsequent Latin-American state-created parties, such as those associated with the Vargas regime in Brazil, though in very different historical circumstances. The Mexican party eventually became a vast organism, outside of which no access to political power or influence would be possible. At its core stood the *quid pro quo* between the state and organised labor. The patronage of worker organisations by the state derived from the period of dominance by the Sonora-born leaders, the 'Sonora dynasty', between 1920 and 1934. As late as the 1970s, the ruling party could still be described, at least in part, as an alliance between bureaucracy and organised labour.

Calles's model, developed later by Lázaro Cárdenas (1895–1970), was the one-party states of Europe, which were emerging against the background of the crisis of political and economic liberalism. For the political reconstruction of Mexico in the aftermath of Revolution, the United States was clearly not the model applied. On the contrary, Mexican revolutionaries desperately concerned to retain power in the face of *Cristero* rebellion, electoral challenge in 1929, and renewed religious conflict after 1931, adopted a curious hybrid of Fascist Italy and the Soviet Union but without either the fascism or the socialism.

On one very significant matter, the revolutionary regimes after 1920 departed from Díaz's practice – the modernisation of the armed forces.

Revolutionary accession to power and retention of it had been made possible by the military collapse of the federal army in 1913–14. As a result, armed power ceased to belong to a central state but became fragmented among the competing revolutionary chieftains. After 1920, maintenance of the Sonora clique's political dominance depended upon the forging of an effective army out of the loyal armed bands. Under Calles, the chief figure in this process became Amaro. During the period of Calles's dominance, the political authorities at state level frequently used the armed forces to curb peasant pressures for agrarian reform and to disband peasant militias, as in the case of Veracruz in 1933. The process of army professionalization was not completed until the 1940s.

Nationalism, Lázaro Cárdenas, and the Revolution During the 1930s

By the late 1920s, Calles was determined to halt agrarian reform. The impact of the Great Depression, however, made attention to social problems urgent. The effects of the Wall Street Crash of 24 October 1929 were increasingly felt in Mexico from July 1930. As we have seen, serious recession already affected Mexico's three main export commodities, oil, silver, and copper. As Mexico did not depend on any one commodity and already had a reasonably diversified economy, the impact of the Great Depression was not as severe as in other Latin American countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Peru, or Cuba. Furthermore, the country's institutions were already passing through a process of structural change since the 1910s. Although too much should not be made of this, it did enable a swift adjustment to accelerated change in response to the Depression. Nevertheless, in 1930, nearly 69 per cent of the economically active population still worked in agriculture, despite a hundred years of sporadic attempts to develop national manufacturing industries.

The Mexican economy, however, remained vulnerable. GDP, which had risen 3.3 per cent annually in 1900–10, fell to 2.5 per cent between 1910 and 1925, and then declined further to 1.6 per cent in 1925–40, when it was overtaken by the rate of population growth at 1.8 per cent. Already in 1928, imports were rising while exports were falling. Between 1929 and 1932, government revenues from exports fell 29 per cent, while their purchasing power fell by more than 50 per cent in the same period. The Depression exposed all the more the hazards of reliance on the international

market. Within the PNR the debate on the state of the economy and its consequences for society crystallized in an economic nationalist position which stressed the priority of the internal market and the possibilities of state intervention. Some of the foundations had already been laid during the Díaz era, when Mexico became virtually self-sufficient in textiles (manufactured from home-produced cotton) and Latin America's first steel plant had been constructed in Monterrey in 1903.

Mexico's domestic problems were compounded by the repercussions of the Depression within the USA. The US government expelled 310,000 Mexican workers between 1930 and 1933, and in May 1930 restricted import commodities from Mexico. Unemployment trebled. Agricultural production, furthermore, still remained below 1910 levels, in spite of an 18 per cent increase in population during the 1930s. Pressure on land and the food supply required renewed attention to irrigation and outstanding issues of land tenure. The 1923–33, maize crop stood at only 60 per cent of the 1910 figure, itself a very poor year. Between 1934 and 1938, food prices rose 54 per cent, a trend aggravated by unfavourable weather conditions for the three years 1936–8.

The worst years of the Depression were 1931–2, but thereafter the economy began to recover, although the 1929 position had still not been regained in 1933–4. The upward trend of oil and silver prices, however, raised the value and volume of exports. The opening of the Poza Rica oil fields after 1930 in the northern Gulf sector enabled a revival of the Mexican petroleum industry, though production still remained comparatively low at 47 million barrels in 1933. The recovery of oil raised once again the questions of its significance for the domestic economy, the status and profits of the foreign companies, and the condition of the

Mexican workforce. These issues came to a climax during the oil crisis of 1937–8, which culminated in nationalization of the petroleum industry by the Cárdenas government in March 1938.

The PNR Convention in Querétaro selected Cárdenas in May 1933 as the official presidential candidate. The party adopted a Six-Year Plan, originally formulated under Calles's influence. This sought to promote the middle-sized farmer as a parallel and alternative to the *ejido*, in order to facilitate an easier adaptation to new techniques. The PNR conference in December pushed this program leftwards. With the support of the left, Cárdenas committed the PNR to far-reaching reform policies to be put in place by state intervention. Although initially regarded as potentially Calles's fourth puppet president, Cárdenas (1934–40) proceeded to create an independent political base among the peasantry during his celebrated election campaign tour of the country.

A combination of government measures and spontaneous peasant action at the local level had already modified Mexico's structure of landownership before Cárdenas's election on 1 July 1934. Between 1920 and 1934, the trend towards the consolidation of the hacienda, which characterised the period 1870–1910, was reversed. The hacienda still remained a major unit of production and social organisation, but its primacy was challenged at several levels. This was especially the case on the central plateau and adjacent areas where peasant communities remained numerous. The *ejido* took labor out of the private sector and reduced the power of the landowner in the locality. Where the hacienda survived, it frequently faced the opposition of armed bands of *agrарistas* anxious to extend the benefits they had received from government-sponsored agrarian reforms. In many

instances, land redistribution on the spot ran well in advance of government measures.

Cárdenas regarded the *ejido* as an alternative to the *hacienda*, in the same way that he was prepared to experiment with workers' cooperatives as an alternative to capitalism. In June 1937, for instance, the railways (in which the government had held a majority share since 1909) were brought fully under state control, and then on 1 May 1938 handed over to the Railway Workers' Union to manage them. Until 1938, however, the mining and petroleum sectors remained largely under the control of foreign companies, along with 80 per cent of the railroads and tramways, and the entire electrical industry. State intervention during the Cárdenas era considerably modified this picture and fostered a type of mixed economy associated with one-party government. Key industries such as oil became after 1938 less businesses than adjuncts of the bureaucracy. The acceleration of the *ejido* policy responded less to economic considerations than to social and political calculations. Agrarian reform policies, in fact, forced up food prices at a time of inflation due to deficit financing. At the end of the Cárdenas period, agriculture still accounted for 21.8 per cent of GDP, with manufacturing still well below at 16.9 per cent. The economy remained heavily dependent on the export of minerals.



Plate 6.10 The arrival of Trotsky at Tampico, with Frida Kahlo in the picture, 1937. Cast out of the Soviet Union by Stalin, Leon Trotsky, one of the leading Bolsheviks of the Russian Revolution and organiser of the Red Army, had found temporary refuge in Norway. After expulsion, he was allowed by the Cárdenas administration to proceed to Mexico, which would subsequently receive many Spanish Republican exiles. Frida Kahlo, the painter and wife of Diego Rivera, was among those who went to meet Trotsky at the port of Tampico. Rivera and Kahlo supplied the house in Coyoacán, where Trotsky and his wife would live in Mexico City. Trotsky continued his political work there, a focus of socialist activity, until his murder, at Stalin's instigation, in 1940

(Getty Images)

The agrarian reforms of the 1930s formed less part of a grand overall strategy than a reflection of short-term needs. Although applied with vigour between 1934 and 1938, the *ejido* policy dated from 1917 and 1920, and was by no means an innovation of the Cárdenas era. The significance of

those years lay in the different emphasis placed on reconstitution of communal lands in contrast to Calles's preference for private proprietorships. Between 1934 and 1940, the government redistributed 17,906,429 hectares of land, almost all as *ejidos*. The climax came in 1937, when 5,016,321 hectares were handed over to 184,457 titled beneficiaries. By 1940, the *ejido* accounted for over half the arable land in cultivation. The urgency of irrigation and credit in the form of seeds, fertilisers, tools, and livestock led to the creation of new governmental institutions. Until 1940, *Nacional Financiera*, established in 1934, responded to agrarian needs. The Calles-era Agrarian Bank was divided in 1935 into two new banks, the Bank of Agricultural Credit for small and middle-sized peasants, and the Bank of Ejidal Credit for the cooperative entities. The Cárdenas administration was aware of the danger of *ejidos* lapsing into subsistence units or unviable and inefficient plots. An overriding aim was to supervise the amalgamation of *ejidos* so that they could contribute to the national need for increased food supply. The harsh realities of peasant agriculture and the inadequacy of inputs into that sector frustrated these ambitions. Despite emphasis on the *ejido*, policies of the Calles era were not abandoned under Cárdenas, because the law of May 1938 established an Office of Small Property to protect smallholders from peasant pressure and to issue certificates of exemption from expropriation.

The government, despite the Six-Year Plan, did not have a strategy of industrialization to work through. Oil nationalization resulted from a combination of inherited government difficulties with the companies and the contemporaneous deterioration of labour relations in the industry. Relations with the International Bankers Committee broke down in 1934 and were not repaired until 1942. The Six-Year Plan provided for the

establishment of a relatively innocuous state company, *Petróleos de México*, to compete with the foreign corporations. This company, set up in 1935, would resume control of the private leases once they lapsed. At the same time the government sponsored the amalgamation of the twenty-one unions operating in the oil fields into one organisation. In 1936, this union proposed a renewed, nation-wide contract to the companies, which rejected it as it implied a substantial increase in labour costs. As a result, a general strike took place in the oil fields on 28 May 1937.

The Cárdenas administration took the side of the oil workers and denounced excessive company profits. The government's position was upheld by the Supreme Court in December 1937, which warned the companies that if they continued to show no interest in observing the provisions of Article 123 of the Constitution, they would be regarded as outside the law. As the companies did not back down – and instead hoped for intervention from abroad – the Mexican government resolved the dispute on 18 March 1938 by nationalizing the petroleum industry. This action should not be regarded as in any sense a lurch in the direction of state socialism. Although the government justified nationalization in accordance with Article 127 rather than Article 27 of the Constitution, the calculation behind it was primarily nationalist. For that reason it united all shades of the political spectrum from the far Right to the Marxist Left. Oil nationalization was immediately seen – and for a long time thereafter – as a major national victory against foreign powers comparable to the great victory of 1867 against the European Intervention. It was not a state attack on private enterprise as such, but an economic nationalist measure directed against foreign corporations that had set themselves above the Mexican state. Yet,

domestic political conditions played a large part in Cárdenas's high-risk international politics.

Although a political success, nationalization took place in an unfavourable economic climate. Falling silver and oil exports had reduced government revenue; agrarian reform and public works schemes had worsened the budget deficit, and the bad harvest of 1937 had pushed up food prices. Mexico managed to ride the nationalization crisis partly through Cárdenas's skillful attention to internal politics and partly because of the worsening of the international situation. The British government, which regarded the expropriation as illegal, could do nothing either to prevent or to reverse nationalization, especially since the US administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt (1932–45) was opposed to armed intervention and the European situation continued to degenerate rapidly.

At the time of expropriation, just over half the oil was exported: the 1937 export figure of 24,960,335 barrels fell in the following year to 14,562,250 barrels. The depreciation of the peso from 3.5 (Mexican pesos) to the US dollar to 5 pesos made Mexican exports cheaper. In the short term, the Mexican government sold its nationalised oil to other Latin American countries when it could but more especially to Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Imperial Japan in return for machinery and other capital goods, in order to circumvent the Anglo-American companies' boycott. The US Ambassador, Josephus Daniels, consistently argued in favour of compromise and generally sympathized with the reform policies of the Cárdenas administration, and after the expiration of the latter's term of office ranked him alongside Juárez as a defender of national interests. Neither the State Department nor the US Treasury agreed with Daniels's view of nationalization.

Oil-company hostility, however, was overtaken by US strategic needs after the outbreak of the Second World War. As a gesture, Mexico in July 1941 allowed US Air Force planes to land at Mexican bases on their way to and from the Panama Canal Zone. The United States began to purchase Mexican oil for naval use from June 1942. Agreement was reached over compensation for the oil companies between November 1941 and April 1942. Compensation included only the value of surface-level properties. By 1947, a total of US\$280 million had been paid out. Mexico and Great Britain, which had broken off diplomatic relations in May 1938, did not reach accord until 1947, when US\$130 million was paid to the El Águila company.

The oil crisis of 1937–8 took place within the context of a complex manoeuvring for power among the leading Mexican political figures. In this process, Cárdenas showed himself to be an apt successor to Juárez, not least in his neutralization of opponents but also in his final destruction of Calles. Cárdenas's initial alliances were with two strong men of different origin and function. The first, and tactically the more important at the time, was Saturnino Cedillo (b. 1891, Villa del Maíz, San Luis Potosí), agrarian boss of the State of San Luis Potosí. Cedillo had risen with the revolution and originally aligned with Villa before adhering to the Obregón–Calles network. Although the forces under his control fought against the *cristero* rebellion, Cedillo did not share the anti-clericalism of Calles. Cedillo controlled San Luis Potosí as his personal fief virtually independent of the federal government. The second ally was Vicente Lombardo Toledano (1894–1968), who came from an upper-class Puebla family but passed from Directorship of the National Preparatory School to become in 1936 leader of the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM), which had broken away

from CROM. These two alliances guaranteed Cárdenas the crucial support of army and labour.

Cárdenas cultivated enemies of Calles such as Ortiz Rubio and Portes Gil as well, so that when the break with Calles came in May 1935, he was able to destroy the latter's influence in the PNR. After purging *callistas* from Congress and the State Governorships, Cárdenas exiled Calles and Morones to the United States on 10 April 1936. In August, Cárdenas was strong enough to take advantage of a power struggle between Múgica and Portes Gil to remove the latter from the presidency of the PNR, in order to prevent the creation of an alternative power base at the head of the bureaucracy. Cárdenas then proceeded to break the power of autonomous regional chieftains, beginning with Tomás Garrido Canabal in Tabasco in 1936 and finishing with Cedillo in San Luis Potosí in 1938. Garrido Canabal, who controlled his own private army of young, anticlerical radicals known as the Red Shirts, was forced into exile. Cedillo's power was backed by armed *agraristas*, who were the recipients of the third most far-reaching agrarian reform in the country. The chieftain of San Luis Potosí, furthermore, had made the state a haven for Catholics, including priests, as he opposed the religious and educational policies of the Cárdenas administration.

The central government began the process of undermining Cedillo by sending federal troops into the state as a counterbalance to Cedillo's *agraristas*. At the same time, the Left portrayed Cedillo as a sympathiser with international fascism and as Mexico's potential General Franco. Through managed elections, the federal government began in the state capital the creation of an alternative political machine to that of Cedillo which was based in the countryside. The government, furthermore, brought

the CTM into state politics at a time of labour unrest there. Added to that, the Cárdenas regime intended to organise all beneficiaries of agrarian reform into one centrally managed union which would then be incorporated into the PNR. This policy struck a mortal blow at Cedillo's independent clientele. The combination of these objectives forced Cedillo into opposition. The crisis broke in March–May 1938, and ended with Cedillo's abortive rebellion, flight to the hills, and subsequent assassination in January 1939.

The oil crisis accompanied Cedillo's challenge to the Cárdenas regime. That crisis made the position of Cedillo and the growth of a rightist opposition at the same time all the more serious. However, the political triumph of oil nationalization enabled the regime to deal swiftly and effectively with this last major regional *caudillo*. The Defense Secretary, Manuel Ávila Camacho (1897–1955), played the decisive role both in guaranteeing national security during the oil crisis and in the destruction of Cedillo. This would place him in a commanding position in the following two years, when the issue of the succession to Cárdenas came to the forefront.

The Reorganisation of the Official Party and the Presidential Elections of 1940

In March 1938, Cárdenas broadened the PNR by transforming it into a corporately organised entity with a different name. The Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM) consisted of four ‘sectors’ – organised labour, the newly formed peasant union, the army, and the so-called popular sector. This corporate structure reflected in part the historic traditions of the Hispanic world and in part contemporary practice in the later 1930s and early 1940s. Cárdenas separated the National Peasant Confederation (CNC) from the CTM, as a distinct sector of the PRM, in order to weaken the position of Lombardo Toledano, who as a Marxist was calling for the Mexican Revolution to move towards the Soviet model. The separate CNC, moreover, put organized rural labour directly under the supervision of the federal government. The *ejidatarios* automatically became members of the CNC, the total membership of which already reached 2 million. This measure was the corollary of the *ejido* policy, which at one and the same time both rectified the earlier revolutionary neglect of the peasantry and absorbed it into the all-embracing sphere of state patronage.

The army remained one of the four sectors until December 1940 after the oil crisis had passed and the presidential elections of 1940 had been won by Ávila Camacho, the PRM candidate. Senior officers welcomed the division of the CTM, as they were apprehensive of its influence within the regime and opposed any suggestion of the formation of worker militias on Spanish Republican lines. The popular sector encompassed not only smallholders but owners of small-scale industries, and government

employees. Its strength lay in the Federation of Government Employees Union (FSTSE). In theory, the four sectors of the official party selected the presidential candidate at the nomination convention every six years. In reality, the outgoing incumbent usually indicated unequivocally who was to be his successor. The sectors represented institutionalized pressure groups competing within an increasingly large bureaucratic structure for influence, power, and material rewards. The prime intention was to defuse rural and labor grievances and channel worker aspiration into the party's own institutional channels. In such a way, autonomous or dissident groups would be left out in the cold.

The new party structure effectively strengthened further the power of the central government, especially after the disintegration of Cedillo's position in San Luis Potosí. Cárdenas's labor and agrarian reform policies, including the labor-oriented process of oil nationalization, revealed a great deal concerning the practical functioning of the Mexican Revolution. This consisted basically of a coming together of popular pressures and government manoeuvrings. The PRM represented a synthesis of government orchestrated popular mobilization and popular search for channels through which grievances could be redressed. The ultimate achievement of the Cárdenas era was to bind together hitherto disparate – and even opposed – elements within the Revolution since the 1910s. This was imperative for two reasons: the need for national unity during the oil crisis in face of the potential threat of foreign intervention, and the need to bind the peasantry tightly to the government in the aftermath of the *cristero* rebellion and the emergence of a strong Catholic nationalist opposition to the regime in the form of *Sinarquismo* after May 1937.

The conflict over religion had revived after 1931, following military repression of the *cristeros* and the government's effective abandonment of the 1929 accords. It continued throughout the decade. Guanajuato, Michoacán, and Jalisco were the states most affected. Between 1929 and 1936, some 5,000 people died in the conflict. In Michoacán, where Cárdenas had been Governor between 1928 and 1932, only thirty-three priests remained in the state by the end of his term of office. By 1935, the federal government was still unable to put down opposition in the Bajío, where local smallholders opposed the *ejido* policy as inappropriate to their region. The education issue predominated between 1934 and 1938: the Catholic hierarchy protested against government policy and instructed Catholic organisations and individuals to oppose its application. In May 1937, the Catholic nationalist movement, the Unión Nacional Sinarquista (UNS), was formed. At its core were the rural bourgeoisie and professional lower-middle class of the Bajío. Founded by students of the University of Guanajuato, some of them former seminarians, in their twenties and thirties and mainly from the middle class, the UNS was seen as a spiritual movement for national transformation. Its roots lay in the provincial, Catholic heartlands of the centre-north-west. The UNS followed in the tradition of the Catholic opposition to Carranza from 1916–17 and the *cristero* rebellion of 1926–29, the rejection of the ‘arrangements’ of 1929 and the renewal of conflict after 1931.

The nationalism of the UNS could be seen in its rejection of Marxist class-struggle theory but support for the nationalization of petroleum. The UNS opposed agrarian collectivization and called for the end to the state monopoly of education. The movement posed a threat to the *cardenista* political order not only because it challenged outright monopoly control by

the PNR/PRM but also because it counted among its cross-class membership smallholders, *ejidatarios*, share-croppers, estate-workers, day-labourers, artisans, and workers in small industries. There were some 90,000 militants by 1939, when the UNS denounced the revolutionary system as a new Porfirian era of privilege, poverty, and tyranny. During 1940, its peak year, the UNS controlled the majority of municipalities in the Bajío. The principal danger for the official party lay in the UNS capacity for mobilization, which revived the prospect of a powerful challenge to the regime from the provincial grass-roots level. Even so, the UNS lacked a coherent program and began to lose its thrust as the government modified the anti-clericalism derived from the Calles era after 1938 and especially 1940.

Cárdenas built on the political legacy of the Calles era of which he was essentially a product despite differences of emphasis. The PRM of 1938–46 arose out of the PNR of 1929–38. The party which faced the elections of 1940, however, was more tightly organized and centrally controlled than its more extemporary progenitor. By 1940, virtually all the local political machines independent of the national executive had been superseded. In effect, the Mexican Revolution was in the process of constructing a far more powerful state than had existed either in the Díaz era or during the Spanish colonial viceroyalty.

Three great turning points determined the construction of the monopoly-party state. The defeat of the De la Huerta Rebellion in 1924 ensured that the inner clique of the revolutionary leadership would decide the presidential succession. The presidential election campaign of 1929 and the overwhelming defeat of Vasconcelos guaranteed that there would henceforth be no effective challenge to the official party by any organized

opposition. The election of Ávila Camacho in 1940 demonstrated that no challenge within the party to the presidentially sanctioned official candidate stood any chance of success.

The elections of 1940 also determined that the Mexican Revolution would not move further towards the left. The early withdrawal of Múgica highlighted the move of the Cárdenas administration away from leftist policies after 1938. The arrival of a fugitive Trotsky in Mexico had already divided the left and alienated the pro-Stalinists from Múgica's potential candidature. Accordingly, the principal challenge to official policy from within the regime came not from the Left but from the secular Right. With its focus in the business interests in Monterrey, the Right looked to the candidature of General Juan Andreu Almazán, Military Commander of the Nuevo León District. Ávila Camacho became official PRM candidate principally because his ability to hold the army together in support of the regime had been proved during the Cedillo and oil crises. Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War in April 1939 and the arrival of Republican exiles in Mexico demonstrated the importance of this. Key state governors, such as Miguel Alemán in Veracruz, came out in support of the official candidate. Half the state governors were, in any case, army officers in 1940. Cárdenas campaigned for Ávila Camacho on a centrist ticket, which cut between the divided Left on the one hand and the divided Right on the other. In this vein, Cárdenas condemned 'state socialism', while at the same time warning that the greatest threat to the Mexican Revolution came from international fascism. Ávila Camacho's victory in elections manipulated by the government ensured that economic nationalism, a mixed economy, corporate political organisation, and a compromise on the religious question would prevail in Mexico during the 1940s.

The Monopoly Party, 1940–2000



The combination of favourable international circumstances and internal conditions enabled the governing party to become a monopoly party of government during the three decades after 1940. Mexican economic advances between 1940 and 1970 created a climate of optimism both at home and abroad. Lack of serious opposition after 1943, whether from right or left, provided the party with the opportunity to expand its control throughout most sectors of society. During the 1940s, business was gradually won over, as the leftist stance of the Cárdenas years was discarded and the old rhetoric dropped except for ceremonial occasions. The country's transformation from predominantly rural to urban, the expansion of national industries, the emergence of a mixed economy with a high state profile, the expansion of educational institutions all fostered the impression that Mexico had finally emerged from the blight of underdevelopment and was on the road to peace and prosperity.

The financial reform of 1954 opened the period known as 'stabilized development', generally associated with the Presidencies of Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (1952–8) and Adolfo López Mateos (1958–64) and Antonio Ortiz

Mena's period as Minister of Finance (1958–70). Substantially this lasted until the recession of 1971, although structural problems had already appeared in the economy from the early 1960s. The generation that experienced those decades became accustomed to the combination of political stability, a modicum of social justice, and a growing economy. Middle- and upper-middle-class lifestyles and aspirations were predicated on the continuation of those conditions. Regular visits to the United States and Europe and even study abroad became realisable objectives for the first time beyond the narrow circle of the ostentatiously wealthy and privileged. These expectations, however, ran aground by the end of the 1960s. During the course of the 1970s, the country found itself in completely different political and economic conditions. This transition gave rise to what some Mexican commentators, looking back from the late 1990s with bitterness, regard as the three lost decades. Accordingly, the search has been for who or what to blame.

The decades of economic growth and optimism present a problem of historical interpretation in the light of the stagnation, crisis, and instability which followed after 1970. During the first half of the 1960s, this downturn could not have been anticipated, except perhaps by the most acute observer. However, the three problematic decades after 1970 make it necessary to view the period of expansion in a different light, searching in it for the roots of subsequent difficulties. It is evidently important to identify the limitations of Mexican growth. By the late 1960s, the monopoly party had deepened its control over the political processes and took credit for the economic expansion as a result of the structures it had set in place. However, the connection between economic developments, which were also related to international trends, and the imposition of a monopoly-party

system was by no means proven. By comparison, a similar connection had been assumed between dictatorship and development during the Díaz era, as we have seen. In fact, a case could be made for monopoly-party rule as an obstacle to development through the corruption it entailed, the heavy presence of the national state in the economy, and the uneasy relationship which prevailed between Mexican business and government. This case, however, was rarely made at the time. When, however, the economy went off course in the early 1970s, these and related problems rose to the surface. They did so at a time of mounting political criticism in the aftermath of the repression of the protest movements of 1968. From 1970, monopoly-party rule increasingly became a political issue in itself, although three decades later this problem had still not been resolved.

Part One: The 'Mexican Miracle' and Political Control, 1940–1970

Mexico emerged from the Great Depression by 1934–5. The nationalization of petroleum in 1938 began the process of redirecting oil resources into the domestic economy. The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, and particularly the United States' entry in 1941, increased demand for Mexican products while at the same time creating conditions for a renewal of the process of industrialization which had made headway before the Revolution of 1910. The Mexican economy transformed strikingly from the 1940s. Between 1930 and 1960, the rural to urban relationship in the population structure altered from 66.5 per cent against 33.5 per cent to 49.3 per cent against 50.7 per cent. The contribution of primary activities to the GNP fell from 19.4 per cent in 1940 to 8.9 per cent in 1976. Rapid urbanization and industrialization characterised the three decades before 1970. At the same time, life expectancy increased from thirty-three to thirty-eight years in 1925–40 to sixty-two years by 1970, while the rate of illiteracy fell from 42 per cent in 1950 to 16 per cent by 1970. Impressive as these developments were in Mexican and Latin American terms, the inescapable fact remained that the US state of California with 14 million inhabitants in 1970 had a GNP of US\$50 billion, more than double that of the Mexican Republic with a population of 54 million. Although Mexico's annual per capita income doubled between 1950 and 1970 to US\$600, the figure for the United States stood at US\$3,000.

The Apogee of the Monopoly-Party State (1940–1968)

The election campaign of 1940 was characterised by widespread violence and fraud. The outgoing administration was determined at all costs to secure the election of Manuel Ávila Camacho. The division of the Left contributed to this outcome, and the diffusion of the religious conflicts of the 1920s and 1930s secured Catholic votes. Large-scale abstentions by the *Sinarquistas* further assisted the official party's victory. Rural schoolmasters working through the Confederacion Nacional Campesina played a significant role in securing support for Ávila Camacho. The latter's conciliatory position and ability to defuse opposition enabled the governing party to command the centre-ground of politics at a difficult time of international conflict and internal polarization. Determined to prevent a repetition of the fraud and violence of 1940, Ávila Camacho altered the 1918 Electoral Law in December 1945. Essentially this involved taking away from local and state authorities' control of the electoral process and transferring it to a Federal Commission of Electoral Supervision. The end result proved to be a further strengthening of central government control and presidential influence.



Plate 7.1 Library of the National University of Mexico (UNAM). Designed by Juan O'Gorman (1905–82), Gustavo Saavedra, and Juan Martínez de Velasco. The main buildings of the UNAM were constructed in 1950–6 during the Presidencies of Miguel Alemán (1946–52) and Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (1952–8). The motifs symbolised the cultural dynamism of the post-revolutionary era, but represented all previous epochs in Mexican history retrospectively. The aggressive nationalism would later be complemented by a softer approach in the Museum of Anthropology at Chapultepec in 1964, which continued earlier attempts to integrate the Pre-Columbian era into the post-Independence and post-Revolutionary modern state

(Author's photograph)

Political stability encouraged enough foreign capital back into the country to bolster high rates of growth. Ávila Camacho (1940–6) began the process of healing the breach between the regime and private enterprise. This had become a political necessity in view of the formation of opposition parties associated with business such as the PAN in 1939. Most such groupings vanished during Ávila Camacho's presidency, leaving only the

UNS and the PAN as the principal opposition organizations, though completely distinct from one another and unlikely to combine. Neither offered more than a token opposition. The political stance and the social composition of the PRM in the Ávila Camacho era differed markedly from the original PRM conceived as an alliance of workers and soldiers in the highly charged political conditions of 1938.

During Ávila Camacho's presidency, the elements comprising the Popular Sector of the party considerably increased their influence within the regime. These professional and civil service interests, along with smallholders, were grouped together as the National Confederation of Popular Organisations (CNOP) in 1943. Continued divisions on the Left led to the declining influence of Lombardo Toledano after 1941 and the rise of the moderate, Fidel Velázquez, in the direction of the CTM. Under Velázquez's leadership the long-standing three-way relationship between state, labour, and business became institutionalized after 1945.

In 1946, the official party's name became the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI), the party of the institutionalised revolution, although the corporate structure inherited from the Cárdenas era was preserved. This change in name recognized the transformation of the PRM and the modification of the earlier predominance of the CTM. Although Lombardo Toledano initially supported the candidature of Miguel Alemán, Secretary of the Interior, disillusionment came rapidly. The Alemán administration's clear desire to bring business into cooperation with the regime led to Lombardo Toledano's decision to break with the PRI and found an opposition PPS or Popular Socialist Party, which had no chance of electoral success.

The close relationship between government and business, which remained outside the formal structure of the party, had already been foreshadowed during the Calles period between 1924 and 1934. The Alemán administration (1946–52) resumed this pattern after 1946. Businessmen who had made their money during the immediate post-revolutionary decades of the 1920s and 1930s exercised considerable influence in the administration. Although the overwhelming majority of official-party members belonged to the labour and peasant sectors, they were not the prevailing influence in government in this period. Even so, Alemán's agrarian reform law of December 1946 accelerated the breakup of the large estate, although the objective was the encouragement of private smallholdings with defined limits according to type of land. At its upper levels, however, the so-called smallholding was fast becoming a large-scale property.

At the core of the political system was the process of selection of the presidential candidate. Observation of the principle of no re-election defused the explosive succession question. However, the mysteries surrounding the process of selection remained impenetrable. It was widely believed that until 1970 ex-presidents played a role in the process of succession but that the choice of successor lay effectively in the hands of the incumbent President. The criteria for succession were never elaborated publicly: similarly, the number of participants (or their ranking) in the process was never made known. Since 1934, though, each successor had held office in the administration of his predecessor, and, more to the point, earned his selection by the performance of some decisive service to it. Ávila Camacho's role as Secretary of Defence in 1938, for instance, was a case in point. After 1970, the earlier collegiate process lapsed, and the incumbent

made the choice of successor. Throughout the era of monopoly-party dominance, the President remained at the summit of the political pyramid. Cosío Villegas, in fact, described the political system as a 'six-yearly absolute monarchy'. One might go even further and describe later twentieth-century Mexico as an elective empire posing as a federal republic.

The Strengths and Weaknesses of Expansion

In many respects, the war years themselves were the decisive platform for later expansion. The combination of external and internal factors as contributors to economic growth could be seen clearly at that time. While external factors would always have to be taken into consideration and, in fact, would continue to determine whether the Mexican economy went into crisis or not, the country had, since the Díaz period, built up a basic infrastructure and already laid the foundations for the future growth of national industries. Problems of technology, investment, entrepreneurial enterprise, and a limited market held back economic growth before 1910. Revolutionary warfare during the 1910s decapitalized the economy and, after 1914, had terminated Mexico's access to international credit. Internal conflict obscured trends taking place within the economy and delayed recovery. In 1942, Mexico secured its first international loan since the time of Limantour.

Nacional Financiera became the intermediary between the Mexican government and foreign investors during the 1940s. Government itself acted as mediator between the public and private sectors. The latter still accounted for about 70 per cent of domestic investment after 1940. The cotton-textile industry was a notable recipient. From the 1940s, the Mexican economy maintained a rhythm of growth that lasted substantially until the debt crisis of 1982.

During Ávila Camacho's presidency, the basis for future political stability and economic expansion was laid. Thereafter, between 1946 and 1954, the country moved fast in the direction of industrialization, with the

key oil industry under state control. The government during the 1940s invested heavily in the basic infrastructure. Manufacturing overtook agriculture for the first time in 1951. During the 1960s, output doubled, when agricultural production increased by only one-third. Economic growth was accompanied by high government expenditure on social policy. These objectives required a stronger tax base than Mexico possessed. Even so, the rate of inflation remained virtually stable, particularly after the devaluation of 1948. The Mexican annual rate of inflation stood at 8.4 per cent between 1948 and 1954, in contrast to a 2 per cent rate in the USA.

The Uneasy Balance – Economic Nationalism and Private Enterprise

Economic nationalism remained alive during the 1940s and 1950s, despite the different political atmosphere from that of the Cárdenas era. After the end of the Second World War, Mexican industrialists pressed the government for higher tariffs designed to protect them from foreign, principally United States, imports. The Alemán government responded with policies establishing import quotas and licenses, introduced from 1947 onwards, designed to protect domestic industries. These economic nationalist policies, which followed in the aftermath of oil nationalisation ten years earlier, were designed to isolate the domestic market from external competition. At the same time, the government sought to protect Mexican investors by creating barriers against foreign investment and thereby ‘mexicanize’ the economy. This was a reaction to the open investment policies of the Díaz era. However, it had the long-term effect of curbing expansion and encouraging the state to finance growth by increased recourse to external credit.

In the short term, the political economy of import substitution decreased Mexican dependence on international suppliers. It revealed the debt of post-revolutionary administrations to the pre-revolutionary development of national industries. The closed economy, however, concealed the inefficiencies and technological limitations of the principal sectors of Mexican industry. These became serious obstacles to further growth when the economy slowed down by the mid-1960s and ran into trouble after 1970. Import substitution showed considerable short-term

success by the 1960s, when Mexican manufacturing supplied the bulk of the market for textiles, shoes, foodstuffs, beverages, tobacco, rubber, and glass. Internal demand explained industrial growth during the period from the 1950s to the 1970s.

The state played an active role in the economy and government services expanded considerably. Subsidies and fiscal exemptions, combined with credit from *Nacional Financiera*, contributed to the establishment of new enterprises. The extent of the public sector in Mexico was greater than in any other Latin American country between 1940 and 1980. By 1975, for instance, public-sector investment accounted for 42 per cent of the total domestic capital invested. New industries emerged in both sectors: in 1947, a synthetic-fibre industry began, designed to import-substitute; an electric-motor industry, begun in 1948, operated through sixteen factories in the Federal District, San Luis Potosí, and Guanajuato by 1966; PEMEX began the development of a petrochemical industry in 1959; by 1965, internal demand absorbed over 98 per cent of the production of electricity-carrying copper, developed after 1943; in 1954, Mexico began the construction of railway carriages for internal use in a railway system already under 85 per cent public ownership.

The Alemán presidency, intensely criticized on the Left both then and afterwards, did not represent the sharp departure from revolutionary principles that has usually been attributed to it. *Alemanismo* attempted to give business, both national and foreign, as free a rein as was compatible within the context of the general principles of economic nationalism. The latter presupposed the continuation, and strengthening, of the high-profile state sector in a mixed economy. Too much has been made of the supposed new directions after 1946. During the presidencies of Luis Echeverría

Álvarez (1970–6) and José López Portillo (1976–82), a renewed statism was combined with increasing presidential power and an opportunistic populism. The tension between the Monterrey group of northern business interests and those two administrations seriously compromised the tacit understanding between private enterprise and the monopoly party, which had developed during previous administrations. One has only to consider how much of the Mexican economy there was left to open up by the late 1980s and early 1990s during the Salinas experiment in ‘neo-liberalism’ to appreciate the degree of state management and patronage inherent in the country's economic life.

‘Stabilized Development’ (1954–1971)

This nomenclature for the period 1954–71 concealed long-term structural problems, which were not resolved at that time. Essentially, government objectives were to maintain a low rate of inflation and a stable exchange rate, while, at the same time, controlling public expenditure and the money supply. This policy derived from the devaluation of 1954. Changed international conditions explained the background to the devaluation. The impact of the Korean War (1950–3) had increased world prices, provided opportunities for Mexican exports, and led to the inflow of foreign capital. At the same time, however, this expansion threatened to fuel inflation and increase imports. When wartime expansion came to an end, Mexico faced a balance-of-payments crisis. The incoming president, Ruiz Cortines, who had been Secretary of the Interior in the Alemán cabinet and also a previous Governor of Veracruz, inherited a widespread sense of discontent from the corruption associated with the outgoing administration.

Rising prices, combined with the deterioration of lower-class living standards, presented major political and economic problems. The administration cut back expenditure and campaigned against corruption. At the same time, however, it sought to hold back food-price rises by state participation in the distribution of maize and bean supplies in 1952–3, in face of private-sector objection. The deteriorating position of the currency pointed to an inevitable devaluation of the peso. The 30.8 per cent devaluation of April 1954, from 8.65 pesos to 12.50 pesos in relation to the US dollar, coming in the aftermath of the previous devaluation in 1948, pushed the inflation rate from 6 per cent in 1954 to 15.7 per cent in 1955,

though inflation was subsequently brought under control. Mexican inflation rates in the 1950s and 1960s – an annual average of 2.8 per cent – in no way resembled the high figures for Argentina, Brazil, or Chile.

Manufacturing salaries fell by 4.5 per cent in 1955, in contrast to the rise of 10.9 per cent in the previous year. Popular discontent obliged the government to award a wage increase of 10 per cent to all public-sector workers in May 1954, but this could not match the loss of purchasing power since devaluation. The CTM maintained its quiescent policy, Velázquez opposing a threat of higher wage increases or strike. Worker divisions were contained through recourse to the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Board by the Secretary of Labor, Adolfo López Mateos. The latter enabled the administration to ride relatively smoothly through a period of serious labour discontent. A series of modest wage rises and the increase of the minimum wage managed to defuse the crisis of summer 1954. The decisive position of López Mateos contributed substantially to his selection as successor to Ruiz Cortines in 1958.

The 1954 devaluation laid the basis for the administration's proclaimed policy of 'stabilized development'. Government provided stimuli to the private sector and pushed forward the process of import substitution through tariffs, import quotas, and tax exemptions for new industries. For a time, the internal market continued to be the principal motor of growth. The policy objectives were to combine rapid growth with stable prices and a stable balance of payments, maintaining a fixed exchange rate at the 1954 level. This latter became the orthodoxy of the period, with the result that government failed to use the exchange rate as a mechanism for correcting the trade deficit. The economy, at the same time, was unable to create sufficient jobs. Although the strategic sectors of the economy had expanded

since the 1940s, the strain of providing credit in a low-taxation society could already be felt in the financial system.

Between 1950 and 1962, Gross Domestic Product grew at the impressive annual rate of 5.9 per cent, though, as Enrique Cárdenas has shown, there were fluctuations within this period. Between 1954 and 1957, for instance, GDP grew at the annual rate of 8.2 per cent, but relatively stagnated at a 5.2 per cent level from 1958 to 1962, when the signs of what was to come later could be discerned. The electrical industry, which the López Mateos administration nationalized on 27 September 1960, set the pace at a growth rate of 9.1 per cent in the longer period, with the state-owned oil industry at 7.8 per cent in second place, and manufacturing at 7 per cent. Agriculture trailed at 4.4 per cent in real terms. These figures should be understood in relation to the capacity of the economy to meet the demands placed upon it by society at a time of high population growth at the annual rate of 3.5 per cent during the 1950s and 1960s.

At the peak of expansion, between 1963 and 1971, the annual average growth rate rose to 7.1 per cent, comparable to the Brazilian rate, and approaching the levels of West Germany (7.5 per cent) and Japan (9 per cent). Mexico, along with Brazil and Venezuela, appeared to share in the post-war economic miracles experienced in Japan, West Germany, and Italy. The latter three countries, however, were recovering from wartime damage. They were not 'Third World' societies attempting to transform their structures from traditional or semi-developed to modern and technologically advanced. Once Japan, West Germany, and Italy had passed through the immediate process of reconstruction, they could build thereafter on stable foundations laid down by previous generations.

High rates of growth, however, put pressure on the balance of payments. Accelerated rates required external credit to finance continued expansion. The problem that lay at the heart of this period of development was that if the government tried to hold back expansion, in order to curb dependence on credit, the labor market would contract. At a time when the economy was already incapable of supplying a sufficient number of jobs, this would result in serious social consequences. Governments sought to maintain high rates of growth, while at the same time keeping to below the 7.5 per cent figure. In 1965, 1969, and 1971, growth rates were reduced with a depressing effect on the labor market. Between 1964 and 1967, real wages in the manufacturing sector actually fell by nearly 25 per cent. Since the agricultural sector stagnated during the 1960s, the labor problem became aggravated. By the late 1960s, the Mexican economy proved increasingly unable to finance itself.

The high rate of Mexican population growth would pose future problems if the economy went into recession, especially in view of weaker performance of the agricultural sector. Mexican industry still suffered from the structural problems inherited from the past, chief of which was its technological backwardness. In many respects, it owed its existence to tariff protection. Industry proved strikingly incapable of dominating the export trade, a prospect which might have led to an export model of growth which was to carry South-East and East Asia to prosperity before the collapse of 1997–8. Government policy, in any case, sought to curb exportation in favour of the expansion of the domestic market through the policy of import substitution. Exports, in fact, fell as a proportion of GDP from 25.3 per cent in 1960 to 20.3 per cent in 1970. The contraction of exports at a time when Mexico needed to cover its growing balance of payments deficit presented a

serious structural problem. In curbing exportation, the Mexican government committed a strategic error. Mexican industry, however, could not match its foreign competitors in terms of cost or quality. The technology and capital necessary to transform the productivity of national industry would have to come from abroad. The steel industry, which had originated in Monterrey in 1903, was still producing at relatively low levels in the boom decade of the 1960s.

The geographical focus of manufacturing in Mexico continued to be unbalanced. Nuevo León, with brewing, textiles and shoes, paper, glass, steel, and electrical goods, accounted for 10 per cent of national industrial output during the 1960s. Monterrey's population rose to around 900,000 in 1960, and would reach 1.2 million in the early 1980s.

The border proved to be the weak link in Mexican economic nationalism. Despite decades of economic nationalism, 50 per cent of Mexico's manufacturing assets were controlled by multinational companies. Expansion of manufacturing in the border cities accounted for much of this investment. In sharp contrast to its earlier history, the border zone became the most urban region of Mexico. By 1970, the proportion of urban inhabitants in the whole Republic had risen to 60 per cent – but to 85 per cent in the border states. Industry there attracted migrants from the rest of the country. Population and industry showed a marked tendency to concentrate in cities such as Tijuana, Mexicali, and Ciudad Juárez along the US border, benefiting from US investment in cheap-labour manufacturing and in the cross-border trade. In 1970, only 35 per cent of Tijuana's 300,000 inhabitants (21,000 in 1940) actually originated from Baja California.

The chief cotton-textile cities continued to be Mexico City, Guadalajara, Monterrey, San Luis Potosí, Puebla, and Orizaba, as in the

Díaz period. The greatest concentration of manufacturing production and employment, however, was in the Federal District, the mirror image of the concentration of political power. The metallurgical industry in the Federal District accounted for one-quarter of national production, and chemicals, textiles, and food for one-half by the late 1960s. Other industries grouped around its perimeter, sharing the large pool of unskilled labor and the availability of educational and managerial skills, and tapping the metropolitan consumer market. These factors compounded the dominance of Mexico City and its immediate area in the economic system as well as the political, regardless of the federalism reaffirmed in the Constitution of 1917.

‘Stabilized development’, despite the expansion of the infrastructure, educational and social services, and high growth rates, concealed destabilizing elements. These combined to throw into question the development model adopted since the 1940s. Import substitution was already passing beyond merely consumer goods by the late 1960s, but transfer to capital goods required imports that needed to be paid for by increased exports. The export sector remained weak. The lesson was the urgency of transforming the structure of national industry. This was easier said than done. In the first place, the capital market was insufficiently strong to provide the investment required to sustain a more advanced form of import substitution. Foreign investment was not encouraged for political reasons. Economic nationalism, the reaction to later nineteenth-century liberal economics, proved to be a dead hand by the 1970s, but it lived on after death. In 1973, for instance, the Echeverría administration reaffirmed the restrictions on foreign capital, when the economy required the opposite.

Worst of all, successive administrations failed to reform the structure of taxation. Ortiz Mena's attempts in 1958–60, 1961–2, and 1964–5 all failed, in part through obstruction in congress and in part through suspicion in the private sector. As a result, the tax base remained low: by 1970, still only 18 per cent of taxes came from capital and the bulk from salaries. Echeverría's projected fiscal reform also failed in 1972. An inadequate capital market combined with low tax yields obliged the government to borrow abroad in order to maintain high growth rates.

The Agricultural Sector: Growth and Problems

Agriculture, which had stagnated since the late Díaz period, began to revive during the 1940s and for a time became a principal motor of growth. From 1946 to 1958, the agricultural sector grew at the rate of 7.7 per cent p.a., higher than the economy as a whole. Investment in infrastructure since the 1920s and the expansion of the area under cultivation as a result of agrarian reforms helped to explain this rapid growth. Between 1940 and 1950, the area of irrigated land in private ownership nearly doubled, in contrast to a 23 per cent increase in the case of the *ejidos*. The unforeseen result of revolutionary pressure on large-scale private estates was to oblige the surviving smaller properties to become more efficient by the adoption of farming technology. The expansion of the national textile industry stimulated demand for cotton, cultivated with government credit on irrigated lands especially in the north. Devaluation in 1954 assisted the export sector, which faced falling prices on the world market in the immediate post-Korean War period. During the rest of the 1950s, however, increased productivity, particularly in vital export sectors where there was high demand, accounted for growth. Cotton production reached its peak in volume in 1955, but a fall in the international price in 1958 reduced the profitability. After 1968, cotton went into a prolonged descent.

By 1950, a total of 1,788,000 hectares remained in private ownership, against 1,221,000 hectares belonging to the *ejidos*. Ten years later, more than 5,000 of the 18,699 *ejidos* in the Republic were still inadequately irrigated. The post-Cárdenas decades exposed the deficiencies of the *ejidos*, with the result that a considerable amount of land became converted into

individual plots between 1940 and 1960, assisted with credit supplied by the Ejidal Bank, especially during the Alemán era. The majority of *ejidos* continued to be little more than subsistence plots without credit possibilities. The exceptions were the sugar cooperatives of Morelos. Even so, the *ejido* had been extended in the 1930s not for economic but for political reasons, in order to assuage peasant pressure for land and to prevent opposition movements from securing large-scale rural support. Although the number of *ejidatarios* increased from 1.6 million in 1940 to 2.5 million in 1960, the *ejido* as such had little economic future, especially since the future of agriculture lay in adaptation to advanced machine technology. The principle of restored communal lands remained, nevertheless, an almost sacred revolutionary ideal.

Partly in response to deteriorating conditions on the land, López Mateos, Díaz Ordaz, and Echeverría revived the agrarian reform policies inherited from the 1930s and early 1940s. Between 1958 and 1976, these three administrations distributed (at least on principle) a total of 41,739,800 hectares to 802,000 peasant families. Events in the localities, once the rhetoric of reform had died down, sometimes proved to have a different outcome. In Chiapas, for instance, with a 40 per cent illiteracy level, conditions for the bulk of the rural population significantly worsened between the 1950s and the 1980s, even though this state had become one of Mexico's principal food-producing zones. Cattle-ranching had been spreading in Chiapas across formerly arable land. When Díaz Ordaz awarded a land grant of 50,000 hectares to the town of Venustiano Carranza in 1967, it turned out that 20,000 hectares were already occupied by cattle-ranchers, who refused to budge. In 1976, two years after the federal government had failed to remove the ranchers, local peasants occupied the

lands and began planting. The issue then became one of law and order, and the army was sent in to dislodge them. In 1978, peasants seized the municipal hall, and in the following year a second land occupation took place, which was similarly reversed. This case was not exceptional in Chiapas but representative.

By 1959–63, the agricultural sector was growing at less than the rate of population growth. Part of the explanation lay in the diversion of public investment into industry, communications, and urbanization. The glaring problem became the lag of agricultural production behind national food-consumption requirements. The economic weakness of the *ejidos* combined with growing population pressure on the land and the tendency to minute holdings or *minifundios* incapable of providing subsistence to most peasant families. The question of how to increase productivity fell by the wayside. Government subsidy policies, designed to keep food prices low, proved to be a disincentive to investment. By the late 1960s, Mexico had become a net importer of cereals. In the decade, 1965–75, the agricultural sector grew hardly at all, at an average annual rate of 1 per cent, in contrast to the economy as a whole at the rate of 6.3 per cent annually. The decline of agriculture from the last years of the 1950s had repercussions throughout the economy. It contributed in large measure to the structural problems strongly in evidence during the 1970s.

From the 1960s, the weakness of the agricultural sector, combined with high middle-class living standards, increased the disparities between rich and poor. Furthermore, deteriorating conditions on the land accelerated already rapid urbanization during the 1960s. Mexico City's population, for instance, grew from 5.2 million in 1960 to 8.9 million by 1970 and 10 million in 1976. Shanty towns proliferated around all the main cities. By

1970, the process of import substitution, begun in Mexico during the later Díaz period and resumed in the 1940s, had largely run its course. When the economy began to deteriorate during the 1970s, the social contrasts partly obscured by expansion were left exposed.

Elections, Opposition, and Rising Discontent

In effect, the President dominated the political processes rather than the party. Monopoly party rule disguised the increasing absolutism of the executive. The absence of competitive politics – except within the administration and within the party structure – enabled the expansion of presidential power. Although each individual president surrendered office definitively after the expiration of his six-year mandate, presidential power as such continued to grow. The issue of accountability, along with other constitutional questions such as the relationship of the powers and the effective participation of civil society in the political processes, fell by the wayside. Economic expansion and a generalized sense of improvement, especially during the period from 1954 to 1968, kept these major issues out of the centre of debate.

The official party became an instrument through which social antagonisms could be reconciled without recourse to violence. The actual function of the party has continually been a matter of dispute among analysts. The party throughout its three phases was always a creation of the state rather than of the grass-roots. As such, the state intended it to bolster the position of the incumbent administration. It was not an autonomous vehicle for popular grievances and pressures, although these were expressed through its organs. It did not control the leadership, which functioned on a national basis and through direct appeals to social groups regardless of the party origin of government members. The party as such played no decisive part in the succession issue.

The support of two ex-Presidents and the incumbent ensured López Mateos's succession in 1958 and sustained him in office thereafter. López Mateos, who originated from the State of Mexico, had been educated at the Toluca Institute of Science and Literature. He began his political career as private secretary to the State Governor in 1928 but subsequently opposed Vasconcelos's anti-re-election campaign in the following year. After affiliation in the PNR, however, he became senator for his home state in 1946, secretary-general of the PRI, and leader of the FSTSE, the federal government bureaucracy's union in the early 1950s. He secured the support of Cárdenas as a result of experience in the Treasury and he had earned the long-standing friendship of Alemán. He took office as Ruiz Cortines's Secretary of Labor and Social Welfare in 1952. This experience influenced López Mateos's establishment of the *Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales para los Trabajadores del Estado* (ISSSTE) in December 1959, a state social-welfare institute for its own employees, a vast and costly bureaucracy.



Plate 7.2 The celebrated ‘Café La Habana’. The Café originally opened in Mexico City in 1952. The Cuban revolutionaries, Fidel Castro and ‘Che’ Guevara, seeking refuge in Mexico after failing to overthrow the Batista dictatorship, visited it. After 1959, the Café became a symbolic haunt of the Latin-American Left, where alternative routes to that of the Mexican Revolution would be discussed. The Colombian novelist, Gabriel García Márquez, who made his home in Mexico City, also visited this Café

(Photo by M. A. Anipkin)

During the López Mateos administration, financial policy remained under the control of the highly successful Ortiz Mena. Labor discontent, however, proved to be the bugbear of the López Mateos administration. Accelerated economic development and monetary stability had social consequences which produced tension between the administration and the sectors linked to the official party. Worker opposition to official union leadership threatened state control of labor organisations. The López Mateos administration took the opportunity of the railway workers’

movement of 1958–9 to reimpose tight state control. Further disputes led to the arrest of Demetrio Vallejo, the railway workers' leader, in 1962. Labor repression showed the other face of the López Mateos administration.

The administration, criticized in the early 1960s for alleged machine-politics and electoral gerrymandering, sought to take the heat off by slightly modifying the composition of Congress. In the congressional elections of 1958, the PRI won 153 of the 162 seats; only six went to the PAN, perceived as the main party of opposition. The Electoral Law of 1962 guaranteed five congressional seats to any party polling 2.5 per cent of the vote, up to a maximum of twenty seats, even though it may not have actually won in a constituency. In the congressional elections of 1964, the PAN gained eighteen seats as a result of the 2.5 per cent ruling and won two more outright through election. However, the PRI, in reality a government organism, still remained overwhelmingly the dominant party with 175 seats, all elected. Before the Electoral Reform, opposition parties had secured only 9 out of the 162 seats; in 1964, their full total, including the seats of the PPS and PARM, came to 35 out of a total of 210. This modification should not be understood as a gradual evolution of the Mexican political system towards either a multi-party system or participatory democracy.

The Road to Disillusionment

The full consequences of presidential absolutism were experienced during the administration of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz (1964–70). Originating from Ciudad Serdán (Puebla) and qualified as a lawyer in 1937, Díaz Ordaz had been a congressional deputy in 1943–6 and a senator for Puebla in 1946–52. Between 1958 and 1963, he held the Ministry of the Interior in the López Mateos administration. As President, he retained López Mateos's Finance Minister, Ortiz Mena. During this presidency, two border territories became integrated into the Mexican Republic through agreements with the United States. In December 1968, El Chamizal, the river zone between El Paso and Ciudad Juárez, passed to Mexico, following the rechannelling of the Río Bravo, and in August 1970, Ojinaga, at the confluence of the Ríos Conchos and Bravo, which had been under US control since 1895, was returned to Mexico. The Díaz Ordaz administration revived (with high presidential publicity) land redistribution policies in remote localities, attempted to promote Mexican commercial opportunities in Central America in 1967, and signed the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1969, which prohibited the extension of nuclear weapons to Latin America.

Domestic politics threw the Díaz Ordaz administration out of gear. The monopoly of the PRI throughout the political system remained largely unchallenged. The growth of presidential power, managed relatively discreetly under Ruiz Cortines and López Mateos, seemed a blatant abuse under Díaz Ordaz, who revealed a confrontational tendency. This led to bloodshed in 1968. The administration faced opposition not so much from organised labor or peasant groups but from within the professional classes,

a circumstance it could not have anticipated. Díaz Ordaz viewed criticism as an attack on the presidential office, and regarded public pressures as disturbances which had the object of destabilising the regime and fomenting anarchy. In this spirit, Díaz Ordaz's political miscalculations allowed a dispute over better pay and working conditions with hospital doctors working in the public sector in December 1964 and early 1965 to escalate into a strike movement. The president twice attempted to impose a solution by decree, in February and April 1965, indicating that outside pressure would not be allowed to extract concessions, and finally ordered the doctors back to work on pain of loss of jobs and pay. In the meantime, the government sought to divide and weaken the newly formed doctors' associations. By September, the movement collapsed.

Some individuals within the PRI, conscious of the negative image of the party, attempted reform. The leading proponent was Carlos Madrazo, formerly Governor of Tabasco (1959–64), whom Díaz Ordaz made president of the party. Madrazo sought to open decision-making within the PRI and to end the practice of imposition of official candidates from above and from the outside. The reforms proved unacceptable to Díaz Ordaz, who dismissed Madrazo. Thrust out on a limb, Madrazo, instead of maintaining a timorous silence, went into outright opposition to the administration and drew attention to the unrepresentative nature of the party, a perilous course. Madrazo died in an inadequately explained plane crash in 1969.

Local abuses led to PRI electoral defeats in 1967 and 1968. The PAN won control of the city governments in two state capitals, Mérida (Yucatán) and Hermosillo (Sonora), in 1967. In an unprecedented action, the federal government permitted the opposition to take office. The new municipal governments, however, faced continual obstruction from the PRI-controlled

state legislatures and received no support from the centre. The PAN managed to hold on to Mérida for three years. In 1969, the party tried to win control of the state government, but in a violent campaign the PRI claimed a widely contested victory. Federal government permission for an opposition party, which had won an election, to take office should not be regarded as a new trend. When, for instance, the PAN appeared to have won mayoral elections in Tijuana and Mexicali (Baja California Norte) in 1968, the state legislature annulled them rather than permit the opposition party to hold office.

The pliant role of Congress during the Díaz Ordaz era could be seen in the administration's manoeuvres designed to bring about the fall of the Head of the Federal District, Ernesto Uruchurtu, in October 1966. This post was a cabinet office, and Uruchurtu had been initially appointed by Ruiz Cortines in 1952. During the subsequent fourteen years, the capital city's population and aspect transformed. By the middle of the 1960s, it had become a gleaming, modern metropolis, which also boasted the Museum of Anthropology. The population, however, had doubled to 6 million and problems of traffic congestion and pollution were already of pressing importance. Uruchurtu paid scant attention to judicial procedure in his attempts to accelerate urban modernization by demolishing unhygienic markets and removing squatters. The government was engaged in planning for the Mexico City Olympic Games in October 1968, but Uruchurtu's demolition of squatter shacks on the city's southern perimeter in the autumn of 1966 for the purpose of constructing the Aztec Stadium aroused strong local opposition. Many families maintained they had legal title to the lands involved. Díaz Ordaz used this controversy as a means of bringing down the powerful Uruchurtu, who had been in government employment for

forty-six years. The President began by supporting the dispossessed families through the Department of Health. The obvious breach between the president and the Head of the Federal District passed signals through the political system that the latter was marked out for dismissal. Accordingly, Congress opened a campaign designed to discredit him, followed by a parallel campaign in the press. After that, Uruchurtu's fall was simply a matter of course.

Just as in Europe and the United States, the protest movements of 1968 had a profound impact in Mexico, where the memory of them would prove to be long-lasting. The Díaz Ordaz era has remained permanently overshadowed by the brutal repression of the student movement of August–October 1968 on the eve of the Olympic Games. The choice of Mexico City for the Games represented the first major international event organised in the country since the Centennial of Independence in 1910. Accordingly, the administration remained hypersensitive during the preceding months. Always unpopular and repeatedly given to overreaction, Díaz Ordaz's reputation never recovered from the massacre of 1968.

The student protests formed part of the broader opposition to the Díaz Ordaz administration's repressive measures. The moral credibility and political competence of the administration had already been significantly undermined before the student demonstrations in the capital city gained momentum. After a demonstration at the university in Morelia, Díaz Ordaz, on 6 October 1966, ordered federal troops to occupy the buildings under the pretext of searching for arms. At the same time, he used this opportunity to dismiss the Governor of Michoacán. The student movement in Mexico City began innocuously enough with a conflict between rival groups on 22 July 1968. The intervention of the city's special force, the *granaderos*,

transformed this into a conflict with the police and then into a full-scale protest movement against government violence. Before 1968, students had not been a significant political force in Mexico. By 26 July, the demonstrations were attempting to reach central square, the *zócalo*, traditionally reserved for official manifestations of support for the President. Díaz Ordaz appeared to regard the protest movement as an affront to the dignity of Mexico on the eve of the Olympic Games.

Army occupation of the National Preparatory School, a violation of constitutional immunities, led to a march of 50,000, at the head of which was the Rector of the National University (UNAM). Such a protest had never been seen before. Furthermore, the demonstrations were outside the control of the PRI. The original protests escalated into demands for respect for constitutional rights. By 13 August, 100,000 people, not simply students, were protesting in the *zócalo* against the regime's disrespect for public liberties and the presence of tanks in the city streets. The government saw this growing movement as a revolutionary conspiracy, fomented principally by Cuba, designed to bring down the existing political order. Naive appeals by student protesters to far-left heroes of the late 1960s, such as 'Che' Guevara, inadvertently gave credence to such a view. Given the Mexican context, and above all the social composition of the movement, demand for civil liberties rather than attempted revolution provided the explanation for the scale of protest. The administration made no attempt to establish dialogue. Instead, a silent protest along the Paseo de la Reforma on 13 September was followed five days later by army occupation of the National University until the end of the month, again in violation of its immunities.

Large numbers of arrests and the blatant use of armed force seriously weakened the protest movement. The Tlatelolco demonstration, accordingly, should be seen as a late attempt to rally support after the main thrust of the movement had already passed. The total number of persons killed on the evening of 2 October, when troops and police opened fire on this meeting in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas, remains disputed right up to the present day. The massacre took place in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building and many who worked there witnessed it. The horror of this incident was compounded by the large number of persons arrested or who disappeared thereafter. The unanticipated bloodshed in Mexico City, in full view of the international media, provoked a lengthy crisis between the intellectual middle classes and the PRI regime – until that time a significant supporter and beneficiary. More than thirty years after the event, the question of who gave the order to open fire or how the firing started continues to be disputed. To date, no one has been held judicially responsible.

The massacre, which effectively terminated the protest movement, ultimately gave rise to new forms of opposition which eroded the governing party's support. Although not uniform, these opposition movements provided a challenge to the PRI from outside the established processes and from within civil society. The events of 1968 became the dividing line in the modern history of the PRI and of Mexican political life in general. Much of what happened since has been interpreted in relation to them.

Renewed examination of the events of 1968 during 1998 failed to unearth new evidence, largely because of government retention of the control of information. Statements by Díaz Ordaz's Secretary of the Interior, Echeverría, who became his successor in 1970, did little to clarify the

situation. Echeverría claimed to have no knowledge of the massacre at Tlatelolco, and only learned about it by telephone. As Interior Secretary, he maintained that he had exercised no control over the armed forces. Díaz Ordaz himself claimed to have saved the country from civil war and an international conspiracy to undermine its institutions, though it remained unclear which foreign country sought to destabilize them and why. In a television examination of those events, shown in April 1998, Díaz Ordaz, in a recording made at the end of his presidency, took full responsibility for the decisions made in September 1968, thereby clearing the way for Echeverría's accession to office. Significantly, no one resigned from the government in protest at the massacre. Furthermore, tight PRI control of urban labor ensured that the Paris scenario of May 1968, in which radical workers had joined with student protesters, did not happen in Mexico.

Part Two: Economic Crises and Political Divisions, 1970–2000

The moral and political catastrophe of 1968 began the long and painful decline of the PRI. This political descent was accompanied by the downturn of the economy. Already in August 1969, Ortiz Mena had warned the annual meeting of the IMF and World Bank that Mexican development was still not irreversible and that ‘what had been gained can be lost with relative ease’. After 1970, the negative elements, present beneath the surface during the years of expansion which had enabled middle- and upper-class prosperity, became first evident, then pervading, and finally predominant. Even so, the oil boom of 1977–81 appeared to revive Mexican economic fortunes after the severe financial crisis of 1976 and the first devaluation of the peso since 1954. Political reform, promised in the aftermath of 1968 but delayed until April 1977, appeared to point to a developing pluralism in Mexican political culture. Neither of these promises fulfilled their expectation. Accordingly, the disastrous financial collapse of 1982, which exposed Mexico as the world's second largest debtor state after Brazil, undermined large sectors of support for political structures built up since the 1940s.

The Road to Disaster: The Economy, 1970–1982

The new administration abandoned ‘stabilized development’, which it saw as socially divisive, in favour of ‘shared development’. The proclaimed objective was to promote through state action a fairer distribution of wealth. The growth of the public sector led to an ongoing debate concerning the relationship of the state and private sector during the Echeverría period. Antagonism between the two led to a loss of business confidence. Between 1973 and 1976, the administration was in open conflict with the Monterrey group, at the centre of which since 1974 stood the Grupo Industrial Alfa presided over by Bernardo Garza Sada. The Garza Sada family, brewery owners from the 1890s, controlled a vast network of industrial and banking enterprises, principally in Monterrey. After 1978, *Alfa* moved into cooperation with multinational companies. By 1981, the *Alfa* group employed around a quarter of a million people. The state-controlled sector of the economy, however, expanded, despite failure to introduce fiscal reforms in 1972 designed to increase revenue and introduce a fairer distribution of wealth. Accordingly, the Mexican state resorted to foreign loans, in order to finance increased public expenditure. The external debt grew to alarming proportions, and the cost of servicing it drained potential investment funds from the internal economy. Although the López Portillo (1976–82) administration made overtures to the Monterrey business interests, the discovery of large petroleum and natural-gas deposits renewed the importance of PEMEX and deepened the regime's dependency on public-sector support.

In a completely mistaken analysis, the Left portrayed the crises of 1976 and 1982 as the crisis of the 'capitalist order', when, in fact, the overheavy state sector was part of the problem. Certainly, the administrations of Miguel de la Madrid (1982–8) and Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988–94) concluded that there was not enough capitalism in Mexico. The latter, in particular, set about ensuring that there would be much dismantling of the public sector, although it stopped short at the denationalization of the petroleum industry. The gravity of the crisis of 1982 ensured that the strangling of the first sacred cows passed with scarcely a whimper. The PRI-dominated state, however, made sure that the holiest, PEMEX, the creation of its predecessor party, would continue to graze in lush pastures.

Deepening difficulties after 1982 marked the crisis of the economic nationalism and mixed economy championed during the Cárdenas era. Yet, the economic crisis of the 1980s did not produce a parallel political crisis, still less one which threatened to topple the regime held responsible for the mess. Instead, Mexicans demonstrated remarkable resilience in living in a condition of permanent economic uncertainty. This enabled the PRI regime to buy time for cleaning up its image and thereby continuing in power.

The Political Descent

When he took office in December 1970 at the age of forty-eight, Echeverría promised to reform Mexico's political system. Much else was promised. Echeverría portrayed himself as a radical social reformer dedicated to income redistribution in favour of greater equity 'until the very poorest have attained an adequate standard of living'. He stated that 'over-concentration of income and the marginal position of large groups threaten the harmonious continuity of our development'. He expressed faith in Mexican business and asserted that 'foreign investment should not displace Mexican capital'. The Echeverría cabinet was the youngest since the Alemán era. Its members, however, had the least experience of direct election to office as part of their political careers, as most had passed from university to administrative and technical positions in the federal bureaucracy. This gave the cabinet a 'technocratic' appearance.

Throughout his presidency the condition of the PRI, a result of the erosion of legitimacy since the events of 1968, remained Echeverría's central preoccupation. The urgency of the matter could be seen from the congressional election results of July 1973, when voting for opposition candidates replaced at least for a time the usual practice of large-scale abstention. In spite of the fact that voting is compulsory in Mexico, the abstention rate grew over the period from 1961 to 1979 from 31.5 per cent to 50.8 per cent of registered voters, despite the lowering of the voting age from twenty-one to eighteen years in 1969. In July 1973, the PRI still won 51.7 per cent of the votes cast, but the PAN showed strongly in leading cities such as Puebla, Guanajuato, Cuernavaca, Toluca, León, and Ciudad

Juárez, in spite of the party's lack of a national organization capable of building on such gains. Echeverría, following his predecessor's policies, accelerated agrarian reform, in order to bind the peasant sector more closely to the official party in the aftermath of the widespread erosion of support in urban centres after 1968.

The Organic Law for the Federal District (1970), which reconstituted the capital city administration, did not have real effect until López Portillo's reform of 1977. Although the *Regente* (Mayor) of the Federal District continued to be a presidential nominee, as he had been since 1928 (and would so remain until July 1997), the political reform introduced a greater elective element into the tiers of municipal administration. The problem for the PRI became how to prevent opposition parties from gaining access to elective office on the ward residents' committees (*juntas de vecinos*), the sixteen presidents of which would provide the mayor's consultative committee.

Under political reform, the government set aside 100 of the 400 seats in the Chamber of Deputies for opposition parties. The PRI still retained control of the entire state apparatus, but the executive sought in official terms to integrate opposition parties more fully into the political processes. The government legalized an array of parties, so that the multiplicity would be mutually contradictory. Initial popular indifference led to a higher than ever rate of abstention in the mid-term elections of 1979. By the time of the presidential elections of July 1982, which took place in different economic circumstances, the number of votes cast increased to 74.9 per cent, with 50.1 per cent of the total electorate voting for the PRI.

The scale of repression during 1968 generated a new wave of opposition movements, prepared for outright confrontation with the state. In

certain rural areas, political relations broke down completely during the late 1960s. A full-scale guerrilla movement developed in the state of Guerrero by 1971, involving five army battalions and 10,000 police with air support. The focus lay in some thirty-two communities largely in the Sierra de Atoyac. The central figure was Lucio Cabañas, in hiding since May 1967, and leader of a 'Party of the Poor', who was killed at the end of 1974. Army counter-insurgency tactics broke the movement, although the politics of Guerrero remained turbulent throughout the following decades. The Cabañas rebellion, seen in retrospect, provided a prototype for the Chiapas insurrection of 1994. The survivors of the leftist groups which had participated in the Guerrero events eventually regrouped at the end of the 1980s. The Chiapas rising led to recrudescence of activity and preventive assassinations in Guerrero. By June 1996, twelve such organisations merged to form the EPR (Popular Revolutionary Army).

After 1968, an alliance of students, peasants, and urban workers in Oaxaca succeeded in forming a political movement independent of the PRI by 1972. This was the forerunner of the Worker–Peasant Coalition of the Isthmus (COCEI) two years later. Opposition confrontation with the state government in 1975–7 led to federal intervention in the Benito Juárez University and the occupation of the state capital and main towns by the armed forces. PRI organization of rival factions led to violent clashes in Juchitán in 1977. Three years later, the COCEI won the municipal elections in Juchitán, only to be subjected to harassment from the PRI-controlled state legislature. In December 1982, the COCEI council was removed and 300 individuals arrested in a government attempt to undermine opposition organisation. The movement recovered by 1987 and won control of the

municipal council for the second time in September 1989, though in changed national political circumstances.

The Oil Boom of 1977–1981

López Portillo's administration failed to set the economy on a strong basis in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 1976. Instead, it found itself the beneficiary of renewed expansion in the oil industry. New discoveries in Chiapas and Tabasco in 1972 substantially raised Mexico's productive capacity and reduced bills for imports, especially because Mexico from the late 1960s had no longer been able to supply the country's petroleum needs. The impact of the new developments came too late to save the high-spending Echeverría administration from a 59 per cent currency devaluation in September 1976, when inflation already stood at 22 per cent.

The oil boom of 1977–81 initiated the last period of high growth rates until the late 1990s. It provided the administration's solution to the collapse of the import-substitution strategy pursued by its predecessors. In one sense, this marked a return to the pre-1938 strategy of export-oriented expansion. However, the government still faced the problem of how to finance expansion in a low-taxation economy. Accordingly, it had recourse to foreign credit. Capital requirements for the development of oil and natural gas rose to more than five times the amount invested between 1971 and 1976. Off-shore drilling along the Campeche coast frequently involved private drilling concessions and the sale of rights, about which few questions were asked. The foreign debt had already increased under Echeverría from US\$4.5 billion to US\$19.6 billion between 1970 and 1976. Debt-servicing rose to 32.3 per cent of the value of exports by 1976. Oil expansion, however, led to the overvaluation of the peso. This and other factors fuelled inflation, which stood at 30 per cent when López Portillo

took office but reached 60 per cent by 1982, and 100 per cent by the autumn of that year. For a time, the oil boom took rates of growth to 1960s levels at 8.5 per cent per annum in 1978–81. Beneath the euphoria, however, the gap between rich and poor was widening.

By 1981, Mexico became the fourth largest oil exporter in the world. Oil discoveries took Mexico out of the 1976 crisis and renewed international confidence particularly within the banking community, which pressed loan packages on the country. López Portillo managed the oil sector in conjunction with the Director-General of PEMEX, Jorge Díaz Serrano, a Sonoran mechanical engineer who had represented General Motors in Mexico between 1969 and 1983. Together they decided oil policy largely without reference to the rest of the cabinet. Díaz Serrano, who had presidential ambition, was forced out of office in June 1981 over the issue of oil production ceilings.

External demand for Mexican oil and natural gas raised political problems. Economic nationalists expressed fears of renewed dependence on the US economy. In 1978, oil production at 485.3 million barrels more than doubled that of the peak year, 1921, during the previous boom period. Even so, oil and petrochemicals still accounted for only 49 per cent of exports in 1979, a clear indication that Mexico was not exclusively an oil-exporting country. Furthermore, nationalization in 1938 had ensured that Mexican oil was not subject to the multinational corporations' pricing policies. Oil production rose from 202,100 barrels per day in 1977 to 1,098,000 barrels in 1981. The administration, however, believed world oil prices would continue to rise and consequently ignored signs of a downfall after May 1981. Accordingly, public expenditure and external debt commitments continued to rise. Capital flight, mainly to the USA, encouraged the López

Portillo government to take large amounts of short-term credit, which it would have difficulty paying back.

The collapse of world oil prices during the course of 1981 thrust the newly oil-dependent Mexican economy into turmoil. A series of devaluations followed, beginning in February 1982, when the rate of exchange fell to 47 pesos per US\$1; by the end of the year, the US dollar cost 144 pesos. Panic set in throughout the international financial community, which gave notice to Mexico in July that it could expect no more credit. As a result, Finance Minister Jesús Silva Herzog found himself obliged in the following month to admit that Mexico would be unable to pay its short-term debts, reaching around US\$10,000 million. The total estimated debt came to US\$84,100 million. López Portillo sought a political road out of the financial collapse by nationalizing the private banks in September 1982, during the lame-duck period between the presidential elections and the transfer of power. The regime portrayed this as a patriotic action, a culminating process in the stages of economic nationalism beginning with the nationalization of petroleum in 1938 and continuing through the nationalization of electricity in 1960. In reality, it was an act of unscrupulous opportunism designed to disguise the frantic political maneuverings of a discredited administration.

The Task of Recovery

The scale of the 1982 crisis raised the question of whether this represented the terminal crisis of the post-1940s model of development and the political practices that went with it. The broader perspective of the 1980s indicated that this was the case. Accordingly, the administration of De la Madrid faced two major tasks: how to stabilize the economy and survive the immediate crisis, and to find some alternative model of development for the country. This latter course might conceivably imply a change of political direction as well. Although the economic tasks appeared almost insuperable in the 1980s, the political problems of the regime presented even more complex problems. During the period from 1940 to 1982, the presidency had grown more powerful in relation not only to the legislative branch and the states but also to the rest of the cabinet, the bureaucracy, and the party. Both Echeverría and López Portillo had sought to combine renovated populism with executive absolutism. As in the previous presidencies, the economic model had been rapid development through industrialization in a relatively closed economy with heavy state participation. As in the Díaz period, political liberalization and the application of constitutional precepts had been kept in abeyance. Equally, the justification for this had been the government's apparent success on the economic front. The collapse of the model in 1981–2 raised the problem of what should be done on the political front, once the principal justification for holding back reform had been undermined.

The De la Madrid administration ultimately adopted the policy of liberalizing the economy in order to bring down inflation. As inflation

presented grave social problems, this policy had profound political implications as well. The administration faced the problem of how to avoid strikes and social conflict at a time of generalised hardship. Fidel Velázquez played a central role in sustaining the government at this time by exacting concessions for the official labor unions, price controls, and amendments in the Federal Labor Law. Even so, the purchasing power of wages fell 8.3 per cent between 1983 and 1988, while the cost of living rose 90 per cent. Mexican per capita income, which had been estimated at US\$2,405 in 1982, fell to US\$1,320 by the end of 1987. Continued problems in the agricultural sector meant that 6 million tonnes of food would be imported from the USA under an agreement of March 1983.

In the period 1982–5, the De la Madrid administration began a series of long-awaited structural changes in the economy. The high-profile state sector and large state subsidies had reached the end of the road. The economic structures put in place since the 1930s and already in crisis after 1970 could no longer be sustained. Much of the monopoly-party system, however, remained intricately related to these now-antiquated structures in the form of state-approved unions, patronage, and corruption. Economic reform would inevitably require substantial modification of the prevailing political culture. The authoritarian style of the presidency ensured that these reforms would be imposed on a recalcitrant party and bureaucracy from above. Even so, the administration had no intention of jeopardising the PRI's monopoly of power.

Economic reforms liberalized the market, in order to achieve a measure of sustainable growth. Business, alienated under Echeverría and definitively so in 1981–2, returned to tacit cooperation with the regime during these years. De la Madrid himself was a fiscal conservative, who

instinctively rejected the neo-populism predominant since 1970. The entry of the technocrats symbolized the definitive exclusion of Echeverría from influence over the administration. Within a year of nationalization, 34 per cent of the banking system had returned to private ownership. Public-sector deficit was halved during 1983, through economies, an increase in VAT, and personal income-tax rises. Inflation was reduced to 53.8 per cent during the first eight months of the year. Nevertheless, manufacturing output contracted by 40 per cent and an estimated two-fifths of Mexicans remained without a proper job. The external debt stood at US\$89 billion at the end of 1983. The international banking community took substantial measures to assist Mexico in the struggle to survive the financial crisis. Since IMF criteria were met in the reduction of the budget deficit, the administration gained a favourable reputation abroad. On 30 December, the banks granted a loan of US\$3.8 billion for ten years designed to meet requirements during 1984. Between 1976 and 1995, Mexico would sign seven letters of intent with the IMF.

The economic relationship with the United States remained as crucial as ever. By the end of 1982, Mexico was supplying 15 per cent of US oil imports, slightly above the figure for Saudi Arabia. In an attempt to alleviate the dependence on the US market and to raise its price, Mexico decided to coordinate marketing strategy with OPEC, the organization of world oil producers. When it became clear that OPEC intended to hold back production, in order to force up prices, Mexico ceased to attend meetings as an informal observer after December 1985 and reverted to its own independent pricing policy. At that time, 50 per cent of Mexican crude went to the USA, 25 per cent to Europe, and 10 per cent to Japan. Again apprehensive of over-reliance on the USA, the Mexican government limited

oil export there to 50 per cent of the total. Even so, Mexico's main import from the USA continued to be refined oil products.

Tension between Mexico and the United States developed over the impact of rising US interest rates on the debt-burdened countries. The huge US-government deficit (around US\$200 billion annually) forced up interest rates, especially as the US itself was competing in the international capital market, in order to finance its deficit, caused in part by heavy defence expenditure. To this was added the high cost of US financing of counter-insurgency movements in Central America, principally designed to destabilize Nicaragua, controlled by the Sandinistas since the Revolution of 1979. The Mexican Government, along with others in Latin America, strongly disapproved of this policy. As a rise in US interest rates meant an increase in Latin American debt, debtor states found themselves, in effect, financing US policies they opposed. At the same time, IMF requirements that debtor states reduce their public expenditure contrasted strongly with the current US policies. High interest rates pushed up the value of the dollar and therefore the cost of Mexican imports at a time when two-thirds of Mexican trade was with the USA. Disadvantaged in its import sector, Mexico also faced US protectionist measures directed against its exports. Since US policies in the mid-1980s impeded debt repayment, the international banking community also expressed its concern.

The Mexico City earthquake of September 1985, which resulted in an incalculable number of deaths and missing persons, and strained hospital resources to the limit, severely dented not only government economic strategy but also its political reputation through failure to react promptly. In the longer term, however, the economic recovery continued, as the overall debt level stood at US\$95 billion and appeared to be under control, and a

trade surplus of US\$541 million was registered for that year. In many respects, 1985 proved to be a major turning point, since the government took the decision to join GATT. Membership of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, finalised in 1986, had significant implications for Mexico, since it involved the opening of the economy and the elimination of state subsidies throughout the economy. These were regarded as unfair obstacles to free commercial intercourse between participating members. Such a requirement, however, went against traditional Mexican political economy established since the 1930s. Accordingly, the World Bank, which had already contributed US\$300 million towards recovery from the earthquake, provided a further US\$500 million as a trade adjustment loan designed to ease passage into GATT. The immediate consequence of trade liberalization was a deficit of US\$1,930 million by the end of 1986.

Indebted countries sought to coordinate a response to their creditors at the Cartagena summit of April 1985, especially in view of the international bankers' preference for specific dealings with individual governments. The Baker Plan, which originated within the US government and was presented to the IMF in October, responded to the impasse. Resources assigned by the Plan, however, covered only 25 per cent of the interest payments due from the fifteen nominated countries for 1986–8. It recognized, nevertheless, the urgency of reducing not only the interest but part of the principal as well, in order to enable indebted countries' economies to resume growth. Their governments would be expected to introduce policies designed to facilitate growth, specifically the abandonment of economic nationalism in favour of open economies. The subsequent Brady Plan of March 1988 developed these principles further. The central theme was reduction of debt. Renewed

growth provided the means of resuming payments. Mexico, Venezuela, and Costa Rica became the leading beneficiaries.

As a result of the collapse of world oil prices, Mexico had to diversify its pattern of exports. By 1990, the 1982 pattern had been reversed: over two-thirds of the total value of US\$27 billion was mainly in non-petroleum products, specifically new manufactures. However, an increasing proportion of exports – from 52 per cent of the total in 1982 to 70 per cent by 1989 – went to the USA. Since the Japanese share was also falling, this further highlighted Mexican vulnerability to US economic trends. From 1980, furthermore, natural gas had also gone to the US market. Japan, which was the fourth largest investor in Mexico, doubled its investments between 1983 and 1988 and thereby re-entered the Mexican market in a significant way. Although Japanese enterprises disliked the strong union presence in the petrochemical industry and fisheries, their increased investment sought to facilitate oil exports from the zones of production to the Pacific coast. With both Mexican-government and Japanese-investor eyes on Mexico's position in the Pacific Basin, Japanese capital entered the oil infrastructure, export promotion, and the post-1972 Pacific coast steel complex of Sicomor II. Honda, Nissan, and other Japanese firms were in production in Mexico by 1987, often as a result of debt-for-equity exchanges. At the same time, investment-rule relaxation enabled Japanese capital to enter the border-located *maquiladora* plants.

Declining oil prices adversely affected the balance of payments and cut the spending capacity of the treasury. Between October 1987 and October 1988, the price of Istmo crude fell from US\$17.83 per barrel to US\$10 per barrel, when in 1982 the price had been US\$30.90 for light crude and US\$25.50 for heavy. This decline was very serious in view of the escalation

of prices during 1987. By the summer, the rate of inflation had risen to a disastrous 110 per cent and by the end of the year to 461.4 per cent, far above the IMF targets of 80–85 per cent. With additional loans and outstanding debt obligations, the external debt rose to US\$101.8 billion in 1988. This figure in isolation gives the erroneous impression of a collapsing economy. Nevertheless, general recovery throughout the manufacturing sector took place at the same time. The government successfully managed to contain the crisis and thereby maintain international confidence in the country's overall performance. The inflation rate fell to 46.6 per cent for consumer prices and 33.4 per cent for producer prices (compared to Brazilian and Argentinian inflation rates of 816 per cent and 372 per cent, respectively, in the same year). It is vital to realise that the debt question was caused not by backwardness or stagnation, but by over-zealous expansion, a period of buoyancy, and over-eagerness within the lending community. The bankers put Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, and other countries into the indebted position in which they found themselves so inexorably in 1982. Accordingly, the indebted countries found it difficult to benefit from the general economic recovery in the 'First World' in the latter part of the 1980s. Worse still, they found themselves after 1989 competing with the former socialist economies of the 'Second World' for credit and investment in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

‘Neo-Liberalism’ and Post-Crisis Responses

The presidential elections of July 1988 proved to be the most contested since 1929, as they involved a direct challenge to the governing system. This challenge, however, came from two opposition parties, the PAN and the *Frente Democrático Nacional* (FDN), led by Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas (b. 1934), son of the former President Cárdenas. He had been Governor of Michoacán, his home state from 1980 to 1986 but had broken with the PRI in opposition to its right-ward tendencies. According to the disputed official results, the PRI won 50.7 per cent of the votes cast, the FDN 31.06 per cent, and the PAN 16.81 per cent. Many critics of the regime argued strongly that the FDN had in fact won the elections and alleged fraud, especially since the PRI-managed electoral computers broke down as the results were being calculated. Cárdenas then formed the *Partido Revolucionario Democrático* (PRD) in May 1989, but stood again unsuccessfully in the presidential election of 1994 and 2000.

After the elections, Salinas sought to defuse opposition by proclaiming the end of the single-party system, despite opposition within the PRI. Between 1988 and 1993, political reform was in the air, but little resulted from it. Nevertheless, the fraud issue of 1988 ensured that the government remained virtually obliged to acknowledge opposition victories. Between 1988 and 1991, for instance, opposition parties secured 240 of the 500 seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

The economic reforms introduced by the Salinas administration provoked further debate and controversy. With the ostensible exception of the Chiapas rebellion of January 1994, they did not lead to outright

confrontation. On the contrary, few opponents could find a cogent alternative, beyond appeals for a return to a more corporative and state-dominated past. Many commentators, and certainly those gravitating around the regime, seemed mesmerised by the reforms, which appeared to be such radical departures from traditional economic nationalist policies. The ensuing adoration of Salinas resembled the flattery at the court of Porfirio Díaz. The proclaimed administration policy of taking Mexico into the 'First World' resembled the euphoria accompanying the oil boom of 1977–81 during the López Portillo era.

The motives for Salinas's economic reforms remained the least discussed aspect. The reforms were initiated by the executive. They did not result from national consensus or far-reaching debate. Accordingly, they were imposed from above without discussion, and thereby served to strengthen presidential power even further. Typical of this procedure was the reform of Article 27, a high point of the 1917 Constitution. The administration, while making appeals to the tradition of Zapata, appeared to be reversing one of the most fundamental tenets of the Revolution and the hallowed principles of the Cárdenas era. The reform terminated government responsibility for land redistribution to peasants claiming land from private estates above established norms with the intention of forming *ejidos*. At the same time, it authorized individual members of *ejidos* to become private proprietors in their own right, once the *ejido* itself had voted to participate in the new procedures.

Central-government intervention in the states increased to proportions which nearly reached that of the Cárdenas period, though in completely different circumstances. During his struggle with Calles, Cárdenas replaced nineteen state governors; Salinas removed seventeen of the total of thirty-

two, nine of them as a result of electoral issues. Local circumstances resulted in the election of four state governors representing the PAN during the mid-1990s – in Baja California Norte, Jalisco, Chihuahua, and Guanajuato. The PAN also held important positions in the cities of Aguascalientes and Jalapa.

Privatization in the early 1990s was a response to the problem of budget deficit, which had reached \$150,000 million pesos in 1986. Accordingly, the government saw it as a principal means of bringing down inflation, the priority in its strategy. The 1989 figure of 19.7 per cent demonstrated the measure of success achieved. In May 1990, the Salinas administration fully re-privatized the banks that were nationalized in 1982. Subsequent privatisations marked a reversal of deeply rooted tendencies in Mexican political economy since the 1930s. Between 1920 and 1982, the number of publicly owned enterprises had risen to 1,155, the majority of them brought into the state sector during the 1970s and early 1980s. The Salinas administration used the opportunity of the bankruptcy of a number of prominent state-sector industries to accelerate a programme of privatization. For the first time since 1982, a net transfer of funds to Mexico took place.

In view of the ever-closer economic links, Salinas pressed the US administration in 1990–1 for the formation of a North American free trade area, which would also include Canada. The aim was to link the Mexican economy, in its reformed state, more closely to the US economy, in order to involve the United States in the process of maintaining the monopoly-party in power. The argument was sold to the Bush administration (1988–92) in terms of fortifying North American competition with the established free-trade area of Europe and the growing economies of East and South-East

Asia, at a time of US recession. The agreement was signed in December 1992 and went into effect in January 1994. NAFTA reflected the Salinas government's perception of the future economic course for Mexico, which would be integrated into the international market, the nearest and most powerful representative of which was the United States. The Mexican government intended at the same time to negotiate bilateral trade agreements with Costa Rica, Chile, Venezuela, and Colombia, and to establish a commercial relationship with the European Economic Community. NAFTA, however, differed radically from the EEC (or European Union as it subsequently became known) in that it did not have a political dimension designed to promote subcontinental integration. Similarly, no project existed at the time for movement towards a common currency.

‘Salinization’ represented the second, and major, phase of the restructuring of the Mexican economy begun under De la Madrid. The reforms were designed to remove the barriers preventing the economy from becoming more efficient and competitive. At the same time, the government opened the Mexican market to foreign capital: a new law in December 1993 replaced the restrictions of 1973, themselves dating from the 1940s, on the investment of foreign private capital in the country. Privatisation aimed to reduce government expenditure permanently and at the same time reduce the dead weight of bureaucracy throughout the economy. The government rapidly found, however, that it would have to deal urgently with a deteriorating balance of payments, due to the increase of imports between 1988 and 1993.

The Return of the Catholic Church as a Political Counter

The Salinas government introduced a new factor into the country's domestic politics in February 1993 when it authorized the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with the Holy See, broken since the Juárez era in 1867. Mgr Girolamo Prigione, who as Apostolic Delegate had already gained substantial knowledge of Mexican conditions, held the post of Papal Nuncio until October 1997. Although an initially controversial measure, Prigione was careful not to provoke latent anticlerical feeling within political circles. A papally approved conservative, Prigione became the focus of opposition among progressive elements within the Church and among opponents of the administration. At the same time, he had earned the enmity of the Cardinal-Archbishop, Ernesto Corripio Ahumada, who resented his involvement in the internal affairs of the Mexican Church and had been pressing the Vatican for his removal. Even so, the diplomatic recognition of the Vatican's role in what still remained a largely Catholic country provided the Mexican bishops with an opportunity to criticise government policy and the deepening corruption and everyday violence in the country.

A symptom of this was the unexplained death of the Archbishop of Guadalajara, Cardinal Juan Jesús Posadas, in May 1993, allegedly 'caught in crossfire between rival drug gangs' in the car park outside Guadalajara Airport, where he had gone to await the arrival of the Nuncio. Posadas had been a strong critic of drug trafficking and alleged monopoly-party links. Few were willing to explain how a Cardinal-Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church could be caught in a gunfight between drug barons. The mystery surrounding the event raised suspicions that Posadas had been

specifically targeted: no one could say by whom. Some commentators suggested machinations by the Tijuana drug cartel, widely believed to have PRI connections in Baja California: the gunmen appeared to have flown to Tijuana on a waiting scheduled flight after the killing.

The re-establishment of relations with the Holy See implied close contact between the Mexican hierarchy and the papacy of John Paul II. Free expression of religious practices in public has meant a profound modification of the inheritance of the Reform movement of 1855–76. At the same time, it has drawn the governing party further away from its earlier roots in the Church-State conflicts of the 1920s and 1930s. Catholicism always was a powerful undercurrent, even during the Reform and Revolutionary eras. This current, although still not dominant, grew stronger during the 1990s.

In the post-1993 situation, the Catholic Church sought to exercise significant political pressure on government and society at a crucial turning-point in recent Mexican development and before the proper establishment of democratic practice in the country. Even so, the general Mexican custom of ignoring fixed rules and working out solutions suitable to particular circumstances will probably act as an effective brake on clerical aspirations to tighter control of public behaviour.

Political Challenge and the Issue of Regime Durability

Political reform in the sense of making way for pluralism, guaranteeing effective suffrage, and respecting constitutional rights did not accompany economic reform. The Salinas administration, it is true, departed from general practice by 'allowing' victorious opposition candidates in several cases to take office. To outsiders, this policy appeared to presage political reform and the final emergence of a working constitutional system in Mexico. Such an interpretation, however, proved in the long run to be mistaken. A slight redistribution of political power resulted, though without in any way compromising monopoly-party dominance. In 1989, PAN won the elections for the governorship of Baja California Norte, the first time an opposition party had won a state governorship. In an attempt to restore credibility, Salinas, through the medium of Luis Donaldo Colosio, President of the PRI, ordered the local PRI to accept the PAN victory. This, in effect, meant the removal of a long-established and highly corrupt local party structure, senior members of which seethed with resentment at the Salinas administration thereafter.

The assassination of Colosio, official PRI candidate for the presidency, in Tijuana in March 1994 further plunged the Salinas administration into crisis. The regime's credibility rapidly became further dented as it became clear that no one could be convincingly proved responsible for the murder. The murder took place just as Colosio had begun his campaign for the presidency. Although not president-elect, as Obregón had been at the time of his assassination in 1928, the murder threw the Salinas government into extreme consternation and the country into a state of alarm. Conspiracy

theories abounded, especially in view of the Salinas administration's loss of credibility over the Chiapas rebellion. The murder of Colosio meant that the PRI candidate for the presidency would be Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León, who had not been groomed by Salinas for the succession. Zedillo was obliged to pick up what he could of the legacy of his predecessor. The situation worsened still more with the assassination of José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, party secretary of the PRI, in September 1994. The complicity of the President's brother, Raúl Salinas de Gortari, was alleged.

The disintegration of the Salinas administration, accordingly, led to a far-reaching crisis for the monopoly party, which appeared at times to be terminal. To the contrary, the administration deliberately avoided political reform, since it believed that economic reform would renew the basis of PRI domination, and, more especially, tie the country closer to the US economy. The NAFTA formed the basis of this strategy, and the fruits were reaped when the Clinton administration, in spite of Democratic Party scepticism of the Treaty, decided to bail out the Mexican administration after the financial collapse of December 1994. The economic reforms, however, formed the culmination of a longer process which had begun in the aftermath of the debt crisis of 1982. The dismantling of much of the state sector of the economy and the threat to the interests associated with it had weakened the PRI's position without at the same time opening the political system to effective electoral competition. Once more, the Madero principle of Effective Suffrage remained unobserved.

The financial crisis of December 1994, the most severe since 1982, took the administration by surprise, and the precipitate devaluation which followed deepened the already widespread disillusion throughout the country. Just as De la Madrid inherited the catastrophes of the López

Portillo era, so Zedillo (1994–2000) inherited the consequences of the Salinas presidency. As a result of the December 1994 crisis, GDP fell 6.9 per cent in 1995, in contrast to the previous collapses of 1983 by 4.15 per cent and 1986 by 3.82 per cent. One of the overriding causes of the crisis was the Salinas administration's attempt to avoid the devaluation of the peso from a fixed exchange rate in relation to the US dollar. The explanation for this lay in the administration's attempt to guarantee the continued inflow of investment, attracted by a strong peso and high interest rates. The government went so far as to transfer returns on investments into dollars rather than pesos. The incoming Zedillo administration, however, was not tied to a fixed exchange-rate policy. Furthermore, the PRI election victory in August meant that, in the short term, there would be no adverse political consequences of devaluation.

The question of devaluation had been in the air since March 1994. The background was the worsening trade deficit, as an appreciating peso between 1989 and 1993 had eroded the country's export capacity and led to a boom in imports. The high interest-rate policy of the late Salinas period contributed to the stultification of growth in the internal economy. Deepening uncertainty over devaluation impeded capital inflows, in spite of government policy, and obliged the government to cover the deficit on the current account out of its reserves. The floating of the peso in December ultimately meant that the cost of meeting debt obligations of the dollar-indexed *Tesobonos*, which increased from US\$3,100 million in March to US\$29,200 million by December, would be doubled. This huge indebtedness at short term exceeded even that of 1982.

The Clinton administration's rescue package in February 1995 and further loans from the IMF and an array of banks, totalling US\$50,000

million, and the stabilization policies introduced in March contributed greatly to the rapid recovery of the Mexican economy. The international financial community's confidence in the country thereafter marked a surprising volte-face. During 1996, there was much talk of Mexico 'back in the ring'. The recovery of industry, exportation, and employment, and the fall of inflation lent credence to such a perspective. Even so, two points need to be made concerning the crisis of December 1994. In the first place, it revealed once again the vulnerability of the Mexican economy to external shocks. This in itself reflected the degree of integration of the economy into the international market, a situation which had considerably deepened as a result of the trade liberalization policies implemented after 1985. It further exposed the perennial problem of the shortage of domestic capital and the low level of domestic savings. By contrast, precisely this degree of integration also represented the Mexican economy's source of strength. The linkages involved, particularly to the US economy (and through NAFTA) meant that a subsequent economic upturn would be the likely consequence of an internal upset due to miscalculations in fiscal and monetary policy. By the late 1990s, the strength of the US economy could be seen in the buoyancy of the 2,624 *maquiladoras*, which employed 861,143 persons, many of them women. They accounted for 40 per cent of Mexican exports, though they imported nearly all their input due to the advanced technology employed. *Maquiladoras* specialised in automobiles, electronics, and computers, and showed a high level of efficiency, quality, and adaptability, although combined with low wage levels. They had been seriously hit by the collapse of the peso in December 1994, but recovered remarkably thereafter. The general resilience of the Mexican economy, however, in spite of repeated shocks, stood in marked contrast to the social

disintegration and political disenchantment which continued to characterise the country at large.

Despite continued gerrymandering combined with promises of political reform, PRI electoral support continued to erode throughout the broader period from 1976. The increasing divergence between PRI-controlled electoral processes was revealed again in the mid-term elections of 5 July 1997, when both opposition parties made significant gains. The July congressional elections gave the combined opposition parties a total of 261 seats (PRD 125; PAN 122) in the Chamber of Deputies, against the PRI's 239. For the first time, the governing party lost its majority in the lower house, although it still retained a majority in the Senate. Electoral reverses were compounded in the municipal elections of 20 October 1997, when the PRD gained control of Jalapa. PAN retained control of Orizaba, Córdoba, and Veracruz. In Veracruz, the State Governor issued a declaration which stated his readiness to 'accept and see installed' the new municipal authorities irrespective of party. Before too much is read into these gains, however, the striking total of 50–60 per cent abstentionism should be taken into account.

The government's demonstrable inability to uphold basic law and order in the main cities was apparent to all inhabitants. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas's electoral victory in Mexico City could conceivably have explained government lack of enthusiasm for such measures. Cárdenas won the first elections for Mayor of the Federal District, and a new PRD capital-city administration took office on 5 December. This is a position generally regarded as the second most powerful in the country. In view of the seemingly insurmountable problems of popular housing, education, urban transit and infrastructure, law and order, and pollution in the metropolitan

area, the achievements or failures of the new administration would provide the test of the PRD's credibility. PRI interests combined to impede the smooth functioning of the PRD municipal administration.

In the meantime, the country began to acquire a bad reputation in the international community for corruption, narco-trafficking, and violations of human rights. Complaints from Amnesty International and Non-Government Organisations were heeded by government representatives, although the causes were not reversed. By the last months of 1997, the country's profile had become so negative that it threatened to jeopardise the establishment of a working commercial relationship with the European Union. This arrangement was finally signed in Brussels on 8 December 1997, and provided Mexico with a potential opening that could counterbalance, although in a small way, heavy dependence on the NAFTA. Nevertheless, it would still require an uphill climb, since the European Union share of Mexico's trade had fallen from 11.4 per cent in 1990 to 6.1 per cent in 1996.

The Chiapas Question and the Indigenous Problem

1994, the year of calamities, terminated the credibility of the Salinas government, beginning with the Chiapas uprising on 1 January. Highly media conscious, the rebels timed their occupation of San Cristóbal de Las Casas and Ocosingo to coincide with the coming into force of the NAFTA. The leading figure, 'Sub-comandante Marcos' (Rafael Sebastián Guillén, b. June 1957), originated from a family of small businessmen in the port of Tampico. A product of UNAM, where he studied philosophy, he taught at UAM, then affiliated with leftist guerrilla organisations and passed through a period of training in *Sandinista*-controlled Nicaragua in 1981 and in Cuba in 1982 before appearing in Chiapas in May 1984. The Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), a name designed to recall the Morelos agrarian leader of the 1910s, sought to take advantage of long-standing and varied indigenous grievances. This enabled it to establish a military zone in the Las Cañadas area of the Lacandonian Forest under its exclusive control on the Cuban revolutionary model, claiming this as 'liberated territory'. In such a way, the EZLN presented the Mexican government, taken completely by surprise, with an insurgency situation which required a political as well as a military solution. Since January 1994, no government managed to find a solution to this problem, with the result that it festered indefinitely.

The EZLN portrayed itself as an armed opposition to the prevailing ideology of neo-liberalism. Declarations in January 1994 and 1995 called for the overthrow of the regime, the formation of a government of transition, the convocation of fresh elections, and the formulation of a new

constitution. Despite the guerrillas' response to contemporary issues, the antecedents of the indigenous question went back into Chiapas history. Significant peasant uprisings had taken place in 1711–12 (when the province still formed part of the Kingdom of Guatemala) and 1868–9 in the same Tzotzil and Tzeltal highland areas, where the diocese of San Cristóbal had promoted peasant mobilization from the 1970s. Recession in the dynamic coffee sector in the lowlands during the 1980s cut off the feasibility of peasant migration from the highland Indian communities for profitable seasonal labor. In order to defuse peasant land pressure, the government authorised colonisation of the Lacandonian Forest, where some 100,000 people set up home from the 1970s onwards. Recently formed *ejidos* seemed under threat from Salinas's reform of Article 27 of the Constitution in 1992.

Although possibly consisting of no more than 300 armed guerrillas, the rebellion paralysed government and army, neither of which could afford the political risks of direct confrontation. A section of the capital-city opposition press, such as the ostensibly leftist *La Jornada*, supporter of the PRD, took up the rebellion as an issue with which to castigate the government. Even so, no national movement followed, despite invocation of the name of Zapata and thereby an appeal to the revolutionary tradition of the 1910s. The uprising divided the countryside between the EZLN and their opponents, and widened the breach between the *zapatistas* and the Catholic Church.

The Bishop of Chiapas, Samuel Ruiz, assumed the role of mediator between local rebels and the authorities, and earned considerable enmity within the PRI for that reason. The ambiguity of the relationship between Ruiz and 'Marcos' remained a constant feature of news coverage. Few

opportunities were lost in official circles to discredit Ruiz. Since his arrival in Chiapas in 1960, the bishop had attempted an ecclesiastical reconquest of the indigenous population of the Altos de Chiapas, the highland zone around San Cristóbal, and in the settlements of the Lacandonian Forest. In 1974, an Indigenous Congress was held in San Cristóbal to stimulate peasant politicization and mobilization. The objectives were removal of government appointees and invasion of large-size properties. Ruiz sponsored indigenous self-defence groups during the 1970s. An intense struggle for control of land followed from 1976 onwards. In the second half of the following decade, however, the *zapatistas* penetrated these organizations and thereby threatened diocesan control.

The Zedillo administration's repeated attempts to compromise over the Chiapas question opened the way for concession of autonomy for areas with an indigenous majority. The practical political implications remain unclear. Such issues were not unique to Mexico, still less to Chiapas, but the idea of separate constitutional status for indigenous zones appeared to threaten a reversion to corporativism and the break-up of territorial integrity. Protagonists of such a solution argued that demands for indigenous autonomy at the end of the twentieth century revealed the full extent of nineteenth-century liberal failure in Latin America. This issue remains controversial.

The Zedillo Administration's Last Years

The Zedillo administration in December 1997 and January 1998 looked to be in a shambles, with ministerial changes in the key offices of Finance, Interior, and Foreign Relations. The departure of the Secretary of the Interior was announced before a new Minister of Finance had been found, after the transfer of Guillermo Ortiz to the governorship of the National Bank. The incoming Interior Secretary, Francisco Labastida, a former Governor of Sinaloa, whose election in 1986 had taken place amid charges of electoral fraud by his *PAN-ista* opponents, was a UNAM economist who had first held government office under Echeverría. Zedillo transferred the Secretary of Foreign Relations, José Ángel Gurría, to the Finance Ministry on 5 January, a move which then left the Foreign Ministry vacant. Before the news of the replacement could be announced, the Governor of Chiapas resigned on 7 January. Taking into account his replacement, there had been five Governors of Chiapas since Zedillo took office in December 1994 and eleven since 1976. In total, ten State Governors had during two decades failed to complete their constitutional terms. Zedillo's choice for the new Secretary of Foreign Relations was the PRI Senator, Rosario Green, a UNAM political-science graduate and Under-Secretary under Francisco Solana in 1992.

During 1998, Mexico appeared to be approaching a further period of recession, the depths of which could not be predicted. Two principal influences were the ending of the Asiatic economies' boom phase and the collapse of world oil prices. The first factor, which involved Asiatic currency depreciation by over 200 per cent, had indirect influences

throughout the Latin American economies, and led, as the earlier collapse of the Soviet bloc had done, to the diversion of international financial support. The US government set about preparing a rescue package for the former 'tigers' of eastern Asia. The second factor directly affected Mexico, even though government sources had frequently maintained that, since the collapse of 1982, Mexico was no longer oil-dependent. Gurría's response was three rounds of budget cuts, which purportedly affected no major programs, though the widely believed consequences envisaged quite the contrary, especially with regard to education. The National Bank adjusted the growth rate of GDP downwards from 5.7 per cent to a still optimistic 5 per cent late in January 1998.

The oil crisis threw into relief the long-standing belief in financial circles that the Mexican New peso (at a rate of \$8.5) was overvalued in relation to the US dollar. The government, fearing the political impact of devaluation, sought to hold back the monetary consequences of the fall in petroleum prices through the National Bank. Although the economy (in terms of GDP) grew at the impressive rate of 7 per cent in 1997, macroeconomic movements in the course of the following year threatened to slowdown growth. Monterrey industrialists in late January 1998 called for a reasonable devaluation, in order to avoid a subsequent catastrophe, but that went unheeded. The object was to boost exports and to encourage investment, and to prevent a full-scale recession during 1999. At the beginning of 1999, the dollar exchange rate oscillated around 10 new pesos.

Mexican crude-oil export grew steadily during the mid-1990s, from 1,307,000 barrels per day in 1994 to 1,721,000 barrels in 1997. The collapse of world prices took place at the peak export level of 1,844,000 barrels between January and March 1998. Accordingly, an agreement was

signed on 22 March between Mexico, Venezuela, and Saudi Arabia to reduce export by 100,000 barrels per day. This reduced the April to December estimate to 1,744,000 barrels, though with the possibility of a second round of cutbacks later in the year. Zedillo's visit to Venezuela resulted in an Energy Co-operation Agreement on 16 April, though details of implementation remained to be ascertained. At the beginning of the year, the Mexican government had estimated an oil price of US\$15 per barrel, which was reduced at the time of the first budget cuts to US\$13. However, the market price for Mexican mixed crude by mid-1998 still reached only US\$11 per barrel. Prices fell sharply during the rest of the year.

Jockeying for position among presidential hopefuls began during the rest of the year. During the Spring of 1998, the Zedillo government appeared to have abandoned the practice of presidential selection of the official PRI candidate for forthcoming presidential elections. This would leave the candidacy open to all contenders, and several controversial personalities such as Manuel Bartlett Díaz, Governor of Puebla (1992–8), a hard-line PRI traditionalist, put their names forward, in the hope of taking the limelight away from Cárdenas, a prospective candidate for the PRD, and the PAN's self-proclaimed candidate, Vicente Fox Quesada, Governor of Guanajuato. Defections from the PRI in many states and challenges to local hegemonies in Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero, and elsewhere appeared to suggest the imminence of defeat, whether in the elections themselves or through a prior internal disintegration. Few were willing to predict the outcome of the presidential election.



Plate 7.3 Oaxaca demonstration, November 1998. Demonstrators leave their large calling-card (in English and Spanish) in front of the State Governor's Palace overlooking the *zócalo*, the central square, in the city of Oaxaca. Often regarded as a haven of tranquillity, this city has a vibrant political and cultural life. It is frequently the scene of protests by country people from the outlying districts, denouncing political abuses, violence, and conditions on the land

(Author's photo)

The PRI recovered considerable electoral ground during the second half of the year, retaining the governorship of Oaxaca and winning back Chihuahua from the PAN in August. The PRI held the governorships of Puebla and Sinaloa in November, but lost Tlaxcala to a local opposition coalition which included the PRD. The PRD also took control of the Federal District and the governorship of Zacatecas. By the beginning of 1999, the PAN held governorships of the two border states, Baja California

Norte (where Tijuana is located) and Nuevo León, as well as those of Querétaro, Guanajuato, and Jalisco, and the city governments of Puebla, Oaxaca, Mérida, and Ciudad Juárez, although Culiacán was lost in November 1998 to the PRI. Those elections, however, demonstrated the incapacity of the PAN to take advantage of popular discontent.

Bartlett (b. Puebla 1936), who announced his candidacy in April 1998, was the son of a former Governor of Tabasco manoeuvred out of office by his bitter rival, the same Carlos Madrazo who died in mysterious circumstances in 1969. Bartlett was generally regarded as the principal PRI dinosaur of three potential challengers for the succession; the other two were Robert Madrazo Pintado, Governor of Tabasco from 1994 and son of Carlos Madrazo, and Labastida, incumbent Secretary of the Interior, who had been De la Madrid's Secretary of Commerce. Both Bartlett and Madrazo had criticised the Zedillo administration. Although Labastida remained controversial within Mexico, it appeared that Washington was not ill disposed towards him. Bartlett and Madrazo, however, had reputations and alleged connections which might have flawed their rival bids for the succession. Bartlett had been Secretary of the Interior under De la Madrid, and had presided over the election campaign of 1988, when the computer calculating the final results broke down at the crucial moment. Madrazo, who had put himself under Echeverría's wing, despite his father's unexplained death, ran into controversy over his election expenses of 1994, which greatly exceeded prescribed limits. In primaries, a new procedure representing the 10 million PRI members, the party in November 1999 selected Labastida as its presidential candidate. The leader of the PRD, Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, an ex-PRI-ista like Cárdenas himself, challenged from left of centre.

Many commentators argued at the time that the presidential election of 2000 would be a decisive moment in Mexican history. At least, the result would decide the fate of the PRI. It was true that Mexico was a constitutional state, but no opposition party had ever taken office as a result of victory in a national election. The presidential succession of 2000 was a remarkable transition, which took many Mexicans by surprise. The victory of Fox meant that for the first time in living memory a political party other than the PRI (or its predecessors) would be governing the country. The defeated party, stunned and divided, subsequently began to regroup around Madrazo, who seemed to be its strongest figure. Fox, however, represented an unknown quantity, only loosely attached to his party, which in any case had other leaders. Mexico's prevailing social and economic problems remained for the new administration to deal with as best it could. Its business orientation ensured that the policies of the Salinas and Zedillo era would continue. Good personal relations between Fox and President George W. Bush (2000–4), formerly Governor of Texas, appeared to presage better relations between the two neighbours.

Cultural Developments Since Independence



A rich Mexican historiographical tradition with roots in the colonial period preceded the development of a distinct fictional tradition. Despite discrepancies in timing and quality, both grew in relation to the dawning of national consciousness in the course of the nineteenth century. Each drew on external influences as well as native roots.

Mexican historiography really came into its own with the attempt to ascertain the origins, nature and implications of the struggle for independence from Spain. Carlos María Bustamante (1774–1848), *Cuadro histórico de la revolución de la América mexicana* (1821–7; second edition 1843–6), saw the overthrow of Spanish rule as the reversal of the Conquest. Bustamante had participated in the War of Independence with Morelos and played an active role in politics after 1821. Lucas Alamán, *Historia de México* (five volumes, 1846–52), adopted a different perspective. Alamán posed the problem of the relationship between the new sovereign state, beset by internal division and external threat, and the Spanish colonial

tradition. In his view, Mexico's character derived from its Hispanic and Catholic identity. Alamán's political and historical ideas fused in his lesser known, *Disertaciones sobre la historia mexicana* (1844–6). Commentators in the Liberal tradition, such as José María Luis Mora (1794–1850), looked to European liberalism as the model for a nineteenth-century state. Many Liberals drew their inspiration from the American and French Revolutions. Most of the writers of the post-Independence era raised the questions of Mexican identity and character, which would preoccupy essayists and novelists of later generations. From these fertile sources Mexico's historiographical and literary traditions sprang.

The Reform era became the subject of an intense polemic and accompanying historical investigation in 1905–6 at the time of the centenary of Juárez's birth. Much of this discussion soon merged into the controversy surrounding the damage to the political processes by Díaz's extensive personal rule. The career and ideas of Justo Sierra (1848–1910) epitomised the ambiguities of support and opposition to Díaz's rule at the same time. The radical liberal, Altamirano, had been an early influence on Sierra, who had later moved in the direction of a strong, centralized state, which could exercise constructive influence on society, particularly through universal, public, secular, elementary education. Sierra championed this position from the 1880s onwards in the Juárez tradition. Minister of Education from 1905, Sierra oversaw the foundation of the National University in 1910. Under the influence of European Positivism and Social Darwinism, he saw Mexican history in terms of evolution through progressing stages of development. The Reform era was a decisive point in laying the foundations for a stability and material progress in a secular state. Works such as *México: su evolución social* (1900–2) and *La evolución del*

pueblo mexicano (1902) gave historical expression to this position. Sierra believed that Mexico's identity lay in racial and cultural mixture. As protagonist of the predominant role of the *mestizo* in society, Sierra concurred with Andrés Molina Enríquez (1868–1940), a strong advocate of agrarian reform in the revolutionary years, and anticipated the ideas of José Vasconcelos concerning the new, cosmic race at the heart of Mexican culture.

Themes and Methods in Mexican Literature

The long colonial hegemony was followed by other, non-Spanish cultural, influences, particularly French, for much of the nineteenth century. Yet, Mexican realities, such as ethnic diversity, the predominance of the rural world, and the struggles between lawlessness and a stabilized form of living, penetrated both historiography and fiction. Clandestine practices and illegality, always below the colonial surface, rose after Independence to become major literary themes, as the preoccupation with contrabandists and bandits demonstrated. In the late colonial and early Independence era, José Fernández de Lizardi wrote *El Periquillo Sarniento* (1816), a loosely structured novel of set-pieces and vignettes of social life that became a best-seller in its day. Disguise was a major theme, following in the tradition of the picaresque novels of the Spanish Golden Age. Lizardi, founder of the newspaper, *El Pensador Mexicano* in Mexico City in 1812, sympathized with the ideas of the European Enlightenment and the Cádiz constitutional system, and criticized the colonial authorities, for which he was jailed in 1814. Distinct 'national' types began to emerge in the literature, for instance, the Mexican *ranchero* in Luis Gonzaga Inclán's *Astucia, el jefe de los Hermanos de la Hoja, o los charros contrabandistas de la rama* (1843), about a gang of tobacco contrabandists. Inclán transposed the type of novel popularised by Alexandre Dumas to Mexico. The context was essentially rural and explored the extra-legal activities in which *El Periquillo* also luxuriated. The book was written without literary pretensions.

Altamirano's call after 1867 for a 'national literature' not derived from European models did not fall on responsive ground. Few Mexican artists chose to write novels, even though this was a period when the novel flourished in Europe and the United States. Equally, Mexicans in the latter part of the nineteenth century continued to be fascinated by intellectual developments in Europe. Low literacy levels in the country ensured that writers would remain an élite within an élite. Writers such as Altamirano continued to use romance and allegory to promote national identity. *Clemencia* (1869) and *El Zarco* (written in 1888 but published in 1901) were primarily designed for the education of the ordinary people. They portrayed love across socio-ethnic lines didactically as an implied contribution to national integration in the Mexican Liberal tradition. *El Zarco* also dealt with a bandit group, 'Los plateados'. Another important political figure of the Restored Republic, Vicente Riva Palacio (1832–96) demonstrated greater powers of imagination in his reconstruction of the colonial era, *México a través de los siglos* (1884–9) than in his novels. His historical novel, *Los piratas del Golfo* (1869), was set in the colonial era. A second edition did not appear until 1974. Riva Palacio drew on the archive of the Inquisition as source material for his historical novels.

Manuel Payno (1810–94), Finance Minister in the early 1850s, published *Los Bandidos de Río Frío* in serial form in 1889–91. Its significance lies more in the description of life, customs, and countryside during the time of Santa Anna than in psychological depth or power of imagination. It is more Romantic than realist, despite the author's profession of admiration for the European realist models of his time, and hardly a novel at all but a vast series of sketches. Payno, writing in exile in Spain, based his narrative in the case of Col. Juan Yáñez, who had been a cabinet

member under Santa Anna, and used his position to set up a network of criminals. He was garrotted in 1839 along with several companions. Payno was influenced by the popular tradition of sheet literature, purchased on the streets at low prices from blind vendors. This tradition often specialised in violent deeds.

Rafael Delgado (1853–1914), author of *La calandria* (1890), the first of four novels, was considered by Mariano Azuela (1873–1952), leading novelist of the Revolution, to be the first modern novelist in nineteenth-century Mexico in terms of form, style and psychological depth, especially in relation to his predecessors. Fernando de Fuentes (1894–1958), one of the most celebrated film directors of the early sound days, filmed this novel in 1933. Like many Latin American novels of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Delgado based his writing in his native area of Orizaba in Veracruz, and traced social and generational conflict. They have been described by later critics as ‘creole-type’ novels, because of their search for national identity through regional and ethnic divergence, and their frequent use of descriptive narrative and local dialect. This ‘*criollista*’ mode reached its climax in the years of 1915–45.



Plate 8.1 Porfirian-era Bandstand in Constitution Square, Guadalajara. All Mexican towns and many cities seem to have a bandstand dating from the nineteenth or early twentieth century, where well-known overtures, marches or arias, mostly from Europe, would be played to an elegantly dressed audience, against the background of typical Mexican street scenes and activities. This example from the centre of Guadalajara, Mexico's second city and 'Pearl of the West', has exquisitely sculpted women in prominent positions around the rim

(Author's photo)

The social conflicts of the later Porfirian era generated one of its outstanding novels. The novel by Heriberto Frías (1870–1925), *Tomochic* (1894), deal with a millenarian rebellion in the mountains of western Chihuahua in the early 1890s. The conflict focused around the cult of Teresa Urrea, known as ‘la santa de Cabora’. The author was a second lieutenant in the Federal Army sent to put down the rebellion. After several failures and reflections on the lack of preparedness of the late Porfirian army, the soldiers finally annihilate the rebels. The novel reflected the author's revulsion at the acts in which he had participated. It was first published in the opposition newspaper *El Democrata* which was suppressed by the régime and its editors jailed. Frías was a soldier rather than a writer, and his work reads more like a reporting of experiences than a literary creation. However, its strength lay in his knowledge of the subject matter. This book greatly influenced the later novelists of the Mexican Revolution, in particular Azuela's *Los de abajo* (1915), in approach and direct style. The events provide the context for Paul Vanderwood, *The Power of God against the Guns of Government: Religious Upheaval in Mexico at the turn of the Nineteenth Century* (1998).

In writings by Federico Gamboa (1864–1939), *Santa* (1903), a brutish male sexuality, out of control, leads to seduction, which drives the female character, having succumbed to her own sexual desires, from her home in the (then) village of Chimalistac (now a suburb of Mexico City) into a life of prostitution and degradation. This became the most popular novel since Lizardi's *Periquillo*. It had already passed into eight editions by 1927. Gamboa was heavily influenced by Zola and the French naturalist novel and

its subsequent Spanish counterpart, although the didactic Christian element in the book, which allowed for Santa's final redemption through selfless love, significantly departed from naturalist determinism. After a youth spent enjoying the low life of several capital cities, Gamboa had returned to the Catholic Church in 1902. Awareness of European literary trends, such as naturalism, modernism, and surrealism, demonstrated the readiness of Mexican writers and artists to respond and adapt to broader movements during the period from the 1890s to the 1930s.



Plate 8.2 The Porfirian Era Telegraph Building (*Palacio de Comunicaciones*) in the Calle Tacuba, Mexico City: The Museo Nacional de Arte, since 1982. Designed by the Italian architect, Silvio Contri, this building, intended to be a showpiece of late Porfirian modernization, was constructed by firms from New York, Milan and Florence. Begun in 1905, the Revolution delayed its functioning until 1912, during Madero's Presidency. It became the location of the Mexican National Archives in 1973–7, in transit from the National Palace to the especially reconstituted Lecumberri Prison (operating from 1900 until 1977), where it began service in 1982

(Photo by M. A. Anipkin)

Gamboa's background and professional life revealed a great deal about not only Mexican political alignments but also the role of the writer within the wider political context. His father's career, for instance, had been in the Army. He had fought US invasion forces at the Battle of Angostura in 1847 but had adhered to Maximilian's Second Empire in 1864–7. After a period of eclipse, General Manuel Gamboa worked as an engineer on the

construction of the Mexican Railway after 1874, a post which took him to New York in 1880, where his son learned English and became a lifelong critic of the US way of life and culture. From his later position as First Secretary at the Mexican Embassy in Washington, DC, Gamboa published articles in Mexico denouncing the violence and corruption in US society. He saw the US humiliation of Spain in the Spanish American War of 1898–9, the occupation of Cuba, and the fomenting of Panamanian independence from Colombia as evidence of the USA's hostile designs towards Spanish America. Díaz's rehabilitation of his father made Federico Gamboa an ardent defender of the dictator, even after his fall from power in 1911. Gamboa, like Payno and Riva Palacio before him, spent a considerable part of his life in diplomatic positions outside Mexico. In fact, his first literary publication came a year after his appointment in 1888 to the Mexican Legation in Guatemala, where he would eventually return in 1899–1903 and 1905. After a first visit to Europe in 1890, he was sent to Buenos Aires, where he made the acquaintance of the Nicaraguan poet, Rubén Darío, then Consul General of Colombia. On a second visit to Paris in 1893, he had brief and disillusioning meetings with the leading exponents of French naturalism, Emile Zola and the Goncourt Brothers. Gamboa began work on *Santa* during his second period in Guatemala, influenced strongly by his reading of Leo Tolstoy's *Resurrection*, which appeared in 1899. Through contact with Sierra, Gamboa was able to publish his novel in Barcelona.

In the twenty-five years between 1890 and 1915, the literary style known in the Hispanic World as Modernism took the advance guard of Mexican poetry. Originating with the French symbolist poets of the later nineteenth century, Modernism arrived in Spain with Darío in 1892, and spread from there to Hispanic America. Modernism reacted against the

rhetorical flourishes of Romanticism and sought a sharper precision of language, while at the same time displaying a vivid appreciation of colour. Although not strictly a Modernist himself, the presiding influence over the movement was Justo Sierra. In Mexico, Manuel Gutiérrez Nájera (1859–95), founder of the *Revista Azul* which continued until 1897, became a Mexican precursor in the short story, essay, and poetry, as well as in literary reviews and journalism. The *Revista* became the Modernists' organ in this early phase. From the turn of the century, Mexico City replaced Buenos Aires as the Latin American capital of Modernism. The *Revista Moderna* (1898–1911), principally associated with the poet, Amado Nervo (1870–1919), provided outlets for the poetry of Manuel José Othón (1858–1906), rooted in the rural world of his native state of San Luis Potosí, and Salvador Díaz Mirón (1853–1928), who originated from Veracruz. Ramón López Velarde (1888–1921), who came from the town of Jerez in the state of Zacatecas, had as deep provincial roots as Othón. One of his most striking poems, passionate and evocative, describes the well inside the entrance to his family house in Jerez. A plaque above it now carries a tribute to him by the Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda. Much of López Velarde's poetry portrays the tension between eroticism and religious belief. An opponent of the Díaz régime, he affiliated first to Madero's Anti-Re-Election Movement and then to the Constitutionalists. During Carranza's administration, López Velarde worked in Mexico City at the Interior Ministry. This was the native poetic tradition from which Octavio Paz (1914–98) arose.

Critics of the prevailing emphasis on Positivism in the late Porfirian era founded *El Ateneo de la Juventud* (1906–12), also under Sierra's patronage, and renamed *El Ateneo de México* (1912–14). The precedents were the *Ateneo Mexicano*, founded in 1840, refounded by Riva Palacio in

1882, and renamed *Ateneo Mexicano, Literario y Artístico* in 1902. The new *Ateneo* of 1906 went in conscious opposition to the established organisation and championed a humanism founded in Classical Greece combined with a vision of the future of Mexico rooted in cultural and racial mixture. The arrival of Pedro Henríquez Ureña from the Dominican Republic provided leadership for the new younger generation of anti-*Porfiristas*. Henríquez became the mentor of many future representatives of the Mexican cultural vanguard, such as Alfonso Reyes (1889–1959), Vasconcelos, Azuela, Martín Luis Guzmán (1887–1976), and Salvador Novo (1904–74). The group promoted the essay, *Ariel* (1900), by the Uruguayan Jose Enrique Rodó, which symbolically employed the leading characters in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to make a negative contrast between ‘Anglo-Saxon’ culture, represented by Caliban, and the aesthetic and spiritual values of ‘Latin’ culture. Rodó's position resembled that of Gamboa at the same time. Reyes, son of Governor Reyes of Nuevo León, secured the patronage needed for the first Mexican publication of *Ariel* in Monterrey in 1908. Reyes, who became the champion of both Classical Greek theatre and the literature of the Spanish Golden Age, would spend much of his life in exile in Spain and France. His first major work, *Visión de Anáhuac*, an impression of Pre-Columbian Mexico, was published in Europe in 1917. Like Gamboa, Reyes held a series of diplomatic positions – including Ambassador to both Argentina and Brazil – between 1920 and 1939.

Henríquez Ureña augmented the movement in Mexico, which sought a specific Latin American identity for the country through the experience of the Revolution. He became one of the first to apply the imagery of the labyrinth to this problem and portray it as a rite of passage. Vasconcelos

became Minister of Education under Obregón between 1920 and 1923. His ideas derived from the *Ateneo*, but he saw the Revolution as the means of elevating the cultural level of the mass of the population by means of a state-sponsored literacy campaign. He used his position to offer the walls of many public buildings, such as the auditorium of the National Preparatory School in 1922–3, to muralists such as Rivera. Sierra had first mooted such an idea on the eve of the Revolution. *Vasconcelos' La raza cósmica* (1925) idealized the process of racial mixture, which the author saw as the basis of Mexican identity. It continued in the tradition of Rodó's juxtaposition of Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic cultures, and argued that the future of humanity lay in racial fusion, of which Mexico was a prime example.



Plate 8.3 The Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico City. The Palace is situated adjacent to the Alameda, on its western side. Begun in the late Díaz period in 1904, it was to be constructed on the site of a colonial-era convent extinguished under the Reform Laws and followed by a National Theatre closed in 1901. Building was delayed by sinking subsoil and then aborted in 1913 by revolutionary conflict. It was not completed until 1932–4. Styles had changed in the meantime. The original architect, Adamo Boari, who also constructed the neo-Florentine Central Post Office on the eastern side of the Palace, prepared the exterior in neo-Classical style, which he combined with Art Nouveau imagery popular in the 1900s. Francisco Mariscal completed the building with its interior characterised by many Art Deco motifs, popular in the 1920s and 1930s. Murals by the revolutionary artists, Rivera, Siqueiros, and Orozco and by Rufino Tamayo decorated the upper floors. The strong sense of Mexican national identity was further infused by regular performances of the *Ballet Folklórico de México* during the 1960s and 1970s

(Photo by M. A. Anipkin)

The novel of the Mexican Revolution sought to break the relationship to European literary movements and draw, instead, from Mexican experience. The Revolution, however, brought back *caudillismo* and *caciquismo*, so strongly disliked by Juárez, to the forefront of political and social life. The failure of the Díaz system to provide durable institutions prevented a peaceful transition to constitutional forms of government. The precipitate collapse of central government threw power back into the regions and localities and to whoever could grab hold of it with his loyal band of men, until Calles's extemporary construction of a monopoly party in 1929. For writers and artists, nevertheless, the Revolution had moral significance, which they often sought to portray through the means of symbolism. Although they pushed the *mestizo* and lower-class workers in town and country into the forefront of their creations, the Revolution also brought out the brutal and coarse '*México bronco*', which lay not far beneath the surface of civilized life. The nineteenth-century Latin American theme of civilization versus barbarism assumed renewed form in Revolutionary Mexico. Much of twentieth-century fiction in Mexico focused on the unbridled struggle for power and the theme of betrayal, which accompanied this.

Azuela's *Los de Abajo* reflected the disintegration of central rule during the heavy fighting of the 1910s. The focus is on a small band of peasant fighters led by the young and illiterate, Demetrio Macías, operating in the locality at a moment when revolutionaries were fighting each other. The book cuts straight into this disillusioning conflict without much attention to either background or description. Its principal innovation was to set ordinary people, personalized in the characters, often faintly drawn, at the centre of the action. The author, who came from Lagos de Moreno in

the Altos de Jalisco, based the novel on his own experience as a medical officer with the Villa forces, during the retreat of defeated *villistas* from Guadalajara northward in 1915. Written while the fighting continued, Azuela's work was first published in weekly instalments in a newspaper across the US border in El Paso in October and November that year. The novel did not appear again until 1925, when *El Universal* published it in serial form. Thereafter, it went into many editions and established the author's reputation. Azuela portrays bourgeois intellectuals as exploiting peasant rebellion for their own distinct political objectives. He was an early critic of the changing nature of the Revolution, once Carranza and his allies had taken power.

This criticism became devastating with Guzmán's, *La sombra del Caudillo* (1929). The novel portrayed a hierarchy of masculine power, within which individuals entered into ruthless competition with one another for position and wealth. Army officers, such as the central protagonist, Ignacio Aguirre, the youthful and athletic Minister of War, labour leaders, and aspiring politicians jockey for influence in the new system throughout the novel. Heavy group-drinking bouts attest to the assumed masculinity of the protagonists. Not friendships but only self-interest dictate these tactical alignments. Revolutionary intellectuals were portrayed as unprincipled and unreliable hangers-on. Guzmán wrote this novel during the Calles era (1924–34). The dark, devious figure of the supreme political boss, the *caudillo* – ‘with tiger eyes’ – lurks in the background. Violence, betrayal, and murder are the normal means of political ascent. Guzmán went into exile in Spain in 1925 and remained there until returning to Mexico on the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

Revolutionary Nationalism Versus Cosmopolitanism

Revolutionary nationalism, with its reassertion of violence and masculine prowess, brought a strong reaction from within the literary world. ‘*Los contemporáneos*’, who criticised the new orthodoxies of Revolution and nationalism during the 1920s, sprang from the tradition of the *Ateneo*. They drew on the cosmopolitanism of the later nineteenth century, which the *Modernistas* had represented. They went further than their progenitors, however, in criticising gender stereotypes. Active in literary journals and vanguard theatre, they took the Enlightenment, Walt Whitman, Oscar Wilde, Marcel Proust and André Gide as their models. The poets, Xavier Villaurrutia, translator of William Blake, and Carlos Pellicer, were among their most notable members, which also included Jaime Torres Bodet, the painter Roberto Montenegro, Jorge Cuesta and Samuel Ramos (1893–1959).

These contradictory currents generated a more intensified exploration of ‘Mexicanness’. This, it could be argued, was the least productive or interesting of the literary modes generated by the Revolution and the renewed upsurge of cultural nationalism. This latter, in fact, might be described as a search for exclusivism and, at worst, a descent into introspection and xenophobia. Ramos’ *Perfil del hombre y la cultura en México* (1934) opened the modern exploration of this theme, which reached its climax in the much-commented upon, Paz, *El laberinto de la soledad* (1950). Both writers took as their defining point a supposed Mexican

inferiority complex derived from the psychological impact of Spanish Conquest and subordination to European values. Over-compensation led to *machismo* as a type of camouflage, extreme competitiveness among men, looking for fights, exaltation of virility and animal nature, and the belittling of the feminine and 'civilized'. Paz developed the view that Mexicans sought to keep themselves closed, solitary, and unwilling to communicate. Accordingly, the argument continued, they regarded proximity to another person and self-revelation as a form of cowardice and breaking-down. The 'sons of La Malinche', however, were, he posited, fatherless, relating more to maternal figures. The Mexican preference was for the Virgin of Guadalupe and God the Son as victim at the Passion. These tendentious propositions, which gave preference to psychology over history, have fascinated both Mexicans and foreign observers, perhaps without justification.

Paz came from a distinguished family in the Liberal tradition. His grandfather, Ireneo Paz, had been director of the satirical newspaper, *El Padre Cobos* (1869–75), which had criticised Juárez's persistence in power. The early influence of the Spanish Generation of 1927, particularly the investigation of identity and desire in Luis Cernuda's poetry, had a defining impact on Paz, whose first book of poems appeared in 1933. European development of surrealism – with antecedents in Blake, Rimbaud, and Mallarmé – encountered opposition from cultural nationalists in Mexico during the 1920s and 1930s, despite support from Villaurrutia. Paz deepened his exposure to surrealism while in Europe. André Breton, one of its leading figures, became a particular model for Paz, in spite of his rejection of Breton's dependence on Marx and Freud. Surrealism went beyond reason and explored irrationality and the subconscious through

hallucinations, dreams and sexuality. While in Spain, during the Civil War, Paz met the film director, Luis Buñuel (1900–83), whose *Un chien andalou* (1928), had brought surrealism to the cinema in collaboration with Salvador Dalí. Buñuel would subsequently go into exile in the USA and then Mexico. Paz also encountered Neruda, a Communist Party member, in Madrid.

Breton, in Mexico for the first time in 1938, organised the Third International Surrealist Exhibition in Mexico City in 1940. In the spirit of *Los Contemporáneos*, Paz rejected nationalist xenophobia in Mexico and sought, as the novelist Carlos Fuentes (1928–2012) has done, to set Mexican culture into the context of international literary developments. From 1945 to 1952, Paz was Mexican Cultural Attaché in Paris. During this time, his collection, *Libertad bajo palabra* (1949), appeared for the first time. It would go into several editions through the 1960s and onwards, the content slightly modified with time, as the removal of any influences by Neruda would show.

Diplomatic service culminated in appointment in 1962 as Ambassador to India, whence he would draw considerably on eastern as well as western poetic sources. Paz's rupture with the Mexican regime over the repression of the protest movements of 1968 terminated his diplomatic career. *Posdata* (1970), a type of appendix to the republication of *El laberinto de la soledad*, related the massacre at Tlatelolco in 1968 to the blood sacrifices of the Aztecs, and presidential dominance through the monopoly party to the traditional prevalence of hierarchical structures in Mexican political life. Critic and commentator on Mexican literature and politics, Paz collaborated with many journals and took the lead in the foundation of '*Vuelta*' in 1976, which still continues in print. Paz, who broke with Neruda and also

criticised the Cuban Revolution, opposed official ideologies whether in the Soviet Union or Cuba or in the form of Mexico's PRI. This stance formed the ideological framework for his study of the life and art of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Las trampas de la fe* (1982), without doubt his most important work in prose and a major contribution to literary history. The framework, however, detracts somewhat from the principal thrust of the book, which was the attempt to reassess Sor Juana's, approach, style, and themes in both poetry and drama.

The revolutionary tradition continued strong, however, in parallel fashion, in the work of the celebrated *Taller de Gráfica Popular*, the engravers' workshop, which flourished from 1917 until disbanded in 1959. The woodcut entitled, 'The Revolution Will Triumph', first appeared in 1947 and was republished in 1974. It formed part of a series of 'Prints of the Mexican Revolution'. The founders of the *Taller*, Leopoldo Méndez (1902–69) and Pablo O'Higgins, had broken away from the *Liga de escritores y artistas revolucionarios* of 1934–7, which aimed to educate the working classes through imagery as well as words. This objective they intended to continue through the *Taller*, aligning more with Communism than with the Cárdenas administration. The *Liga* became subsumed into the official governing organs through subsidies from 1937. Méndez was a skilled illustrator, who printed woodcuts entitled 'Porfirio Díaz, Dictator', 'Madero and Pino Suárez, Popular Candidates', and 'Villa on Horseback', as well as scenes of executions and revolutionary trains. The woodcut, 'The Capture of Zapata', by Ignacio Aguirre (1900–90), first appeared in 1947, and was also reissued in 1974. In this group of prints, José Guadalupe Posada's influence could be identified in the reappearance of the skeleton motifs of the late Díaz era. The *Taller* also printed posters and pamphlets

warning of the dangers of fascism and upholding the cause of the Spanish Republic during the Civil War of 1936–9.

Technique and Location

Looking back on the Mexican novel from the perspective of 1947, Azuela concluded that, to date, the country had no fictional tradition comparable to that of Europe. He preferred Inclán and Delgado to any others, but pointed out that Mexico's best writers had, in any case, been neglected by the public. Azuela modified his view somewhat on the publication of *Al filo del agua* (1947) by Agustín Yáñez (1904–80). Despite his admiration for the boldness of the novel's application of European fictional techniques, he, nevertheless, disliked its episodic or cinematic character. Yáñez, like Azuela, came from the Altos de Jalisco, and his early work was rooted in that environment of traditional Catholicism (which he criticized), *ranchero* predominance, and provincial-city liberalism. Six novels, in two cycles of three, written between the 1940s and 1970s, explored the rural and urban impact of the Revolution and the relationship between society and the new revolutionary elites.

Al filo del Agua (*On the Brink of the Storm* in the English version), the first of the rural cycle, focused on a small town in the Altos, which might have been the author's home town of Yahualica. The *ranchero* environment was uppermost, and the town's sexual repression would be accompanied by outbursts of violence. Yáñez adopted the stream of consciousness technique and the internal monologues derived from Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. The narrative displayed the inner reactions of his characters, particularly their pent-up emotions in a suffocating small town, set against the background of the disintegration of the Díaz régime. This innovative work,

which opened the way for a later generation of writers, also marked the ending of the phase of novels of the Revolution.

The group around Yáñez in Guadalajara ran a magazine, *Bandera de Provincia*, which introduced Joyce to its Spanish-speaking readers. The influence of Paul Claudel, the French Catholic writer, was also apparent. The imagery of women in mourning and the ringing of church bells pervade the novel. The Revolution is seen as a breath of clean air, refreshing rain, cleansing and liberating. In reality, however, it was far from that in historical terms. *La creación* (1951), the first of the urban cycle, took several of these themes and characters into the artistic world of the 1920s, where Gabriel Martínez, the mysterious bell-ringer of the 1947 novel, becomes, after ten years in Europe, a successful composer in Mexico. A panoply of intellectuals appears in the book, from Rivera and the composer, Silvestre Revueltas (1899–1940), to Villaurrutia and the photographer, Tina Modotti (1897–1942). One of Gabriel's main endeavours is to write music, which captures the mood of López Velarde's poetry. In many respects, Gabriel's fictional dilemma of integrating Mexican popular music into contemporary European experimentalism ran parallel to that of Revueltas in real life. Yáñez himself taught in Guadalajara, rose to become State Governor of Jalisco in 1952–8 and Secretary of Public Education from 1964 to 1970 under Díaz Ordaz. After the publication of Sierra's *Obras completas* (1948), a testimony to the regime's estimation of this earlier figure dedicated to stabilized development, Yáñez published his own study of Sierra's achievements and ideas in 1950.

The provincial grounding, which had provided the inspirational starting-point for Yáñez, became the mainspring for Juan Rulfo (1918–86), who came from the small town of Sayula, south of Lake Chapala, also in

the State of Jalisco. He began his career in the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista*, founded in 1949, where he would have been familiar with peasant and Indian perspectives. *Pedro Páramo* (1955) and the collection of stories, *El llano en llamas* (1953) portrayed a dissolution of external reality, a world of hallucination, in which the spiritual and material worlds were imperceptibly but irrevocably connected. Rulfo removed the barrier between the dead and the living. Again in the locality, the mythical Comala hardly seems to exist in time and space. Rulfo portrays village folk, downtrodden, forgotten and often disoriented. Dominant figures like Pedro Páramo, rule with no respect for law or life. Here again is the lost father-figure, for whom the son at his mother's behest is searching in vain. Rulfo's work remained ignored for some years, although he is now regarded as one of Mexico's foremost writers, despite his small output.

Mexican Literature from the 1960s

By the 1960s, the earlier regional and rural focus, which had characterised the novels of the Revolution and the ‘creole-type’ novels, gave way to the urban milieu, a reflection of the rapid changes over the previous two decades. Carlos Fuentes's early novel, *La región más transparente* (1958) with its location in Mexico City, illustrated this new urban focus. It provided a critique of contemporary society – materialist and selfish – in the aftermath of the Revolution from a mildly leftist perspective. Experiments in form and technique showed external influences, notably that of the US writer John Dos Passos. Fuentes, who grew up in several American countries, where his father was in the diplomatic service, studied law at UNAM from 1944, worked in the foreign service from 1950 to 1962, and became Ambassador to France in 1975–7. Fluent in several languages, particularly English and French, the young Fuentes made many acquaintances on the political and literary scene, including the Latin American writers, Miguel Angel Asturias, Julio Cortázar, and Alejo Carpentier, exiled in Paris because of dictatorships at home.

In *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1962), Fuentes offered a retrospective and critical assessment of the Revolution through the eyes of the central figure, looking back from his death bed. Chronology becomes dissolved in disjointed flashbacks. In the tradition of Guzmán, this novel pointed to the pursuit of wealth and power by the post-Revolutionary elite. Angeles Mastretta's (b. 1949), *Arráncame la vida* (1985: tr. as ‘*Mexican Bolero*’, 1989), subsequently dealt, in less experimental form than *Artemio Cruz*,

with the subject of abuse of power within the monopoly party. The perspective is that of the young wife of a brutal boss-figure, who rises from the small-town lower classes – in this case Zacatlán in the Puebla sierra – to become state governor and then presidential adviser in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The novel traces her growing awareness of the unscrupulous political practices around her and of her own marital circumstances. The character of Andrés Ascencio looks back to the illiterate and uncouth General Encarnación Reyes, Chief of Military Operations in the State of Puebla, another military politician on the make, in the earlier Guzmán novel, during the previous decade. Fuentes brought his ongoing critique of the post-Revolutionary order into the centre of presidential politics with his *La silla del águila* (2002).

Fuentes's literary influences ranged broadly. Reyes, whose elegant style had been praised by the Argentine writer, Jorge Luis Borges, remained a powerful early influence. Reyes had consistently argued, as Fuentes himself would later do, for Mexico's integration into the European literary tradition. While resident in Buenos Aires, the young Fuentes first became familiar with the work of Borges, who questioned the nature of history, reality and language, and argued for the primacy of imagination and symbol. Cervantes, however, proved to be the profoundest influence of all, especially because of the early seventeenth-century Spanish author's use of character and language to juxtapose reality and imagination in *Don Quijote* (1605 and 1615).

After his first successes, Fuentes soon became a well-known speaker on the international circuit, while at the same time maintaining a large, varied, and often experimental literary output from the 1960s onward. Fuentes went beyond Azuela's earlier examination of the development of

the specifically Mexican novel. In 1969, he published an essay, *La nueva novela hispanoamericana*, which by 1980 had already gone into six editions. Fuentes's standpoint was not simply Mexico but Spanish America as a whole. He discussed the changes in the nature and techniques of the novel under the impact of Cortázar, García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa, José Donoso and other writers of the so-called literary 'boom' of the 1960s, many of whom were published by the enterprising Barcelona house of Seix Barral.

As the Spanish Civil War had in the later 1930s, the Cuban Revolution of 1959 galvanised a generation of Latin American writers and intellectuals, who saw it initially as a brave challenge to subordination by the United States. Disillusionment took some time to follow but increased authoritarianism in Cuba and repeated curtailment of freedom of expression eventually brought it about. Thereafter, the Cuban Revolution became a source of division among Latin American writers. The 1968 upheavals further heightened political consciousness among writers. Elena Poniatowska (b. 1933), who began as a journalist on the quality newspaper *Excelsior*, delivered an impassioned critique of PRI hegemony after the 1968 massacre in *La noche de Tlatelolco* (1971). Her characteristic autobiographical or documentary narrative technique has frequently focused on forgotten female voices. Documentary techniques also produced striking results in *Nada, nadie* (1988), which drew on the horrors experienced by ordinary people during the earthquake of 1985 as a result of decades of government corruption and negligence. In a later work, Poniatowska re-examined one of the figures of the immediate post-Revolutionary period in *Tinísima* (1992), the photographer, Modotti, in a 663-page biographical novel, which set her in the artistic and political context of her time.

Modotti, a pioneering photographer in the 1920s, became a member of the Communist Party, and was expelled from Mexico in 1930 as an undesirable alien, after the rupture of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. She trained as a Soviet agent in Moscow, and later took part in the defence of Madrid during the Spanish Civil War. At the Valencia International Writers' Conference of 1937, she encountered both Pellicer and Paz with his first wife, the novelist Elena Garro. Revueltas, conducting in Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia, was also there, along with André Malraux, Max Aub, Stephen Spender, Neruda, and other Spanish American poets. The presence of the Mexican contingent reflected not only individual support for the Spanish Republic but also the Cárdenas administration's commitment to the Republican cause. In fact, the climactic point of Fuentes' *Death of Artemio Cruz*, comes as the jaded revolutionary recalls the death of his son, one of the Mexican volunteers who fought on the Republican side.

The search for Mexican identity, which had been such a major concern with Paz, deeply preoccupied Fuentes, who at first was heavily influenced by him. However, Fuentes by the late 1960s and early 1970s moved away from the earlier Mexican search for the roots of modern culture in the Aztec and Conquest periods, and began to explore more fully its Spanish origins. The result was *Terra Nostra* (1975). This huge novel of varying modes and techniques, explored not only history and the problem of time but also the nature of language and fiction. Philip II's monastery-palace, El Escorial, provided the point of departure, from which hypothetical, alternative histories of Spain and its uneasy relationship with Spanish America might be imagined. The heart of the matter lay in the closure of Spain to mainstream European influences during the latter part of the sixteenth century, which in the writer's view had deleterious consequences for the

American dominions thereafter. The range of fictional influences, from Cervantes to Joyce and Borges, deepened this ambitious novel's thematic and structural complexity. The multiple and often contradictory nature of the Hispanic culture, which Spain gave to the Americas, inevitably becomes a central theme of the novel. In a later historical novel, *La campaña* (1990: Eng. *The Campaign*, 1991), Fuentes contrasted the values of the European Enlightenment, entering through Buenos Aires, with the Spanish American realities of family, patriarchy, chieftains with armed bands, and the traditional Church during the Wars of Independence.

In many respects, the 1960s became the defining decade in which Mexican (and Latin American) literature joined the international mainstream. Writers sought, at the same time, to relate developments in literary technique to the changed urban society from the 1940s onwards. Emphasis fell more on psychology than sociology, and on the subconscious more than the rational. The long-term influence of Joyce was distinctly apparent in literature of the 1960s and early 1970s. Many Latin American writers knew English, American, and French literature in the original language and were not strictly dependent on delayed Spanish translations. Latin American writers explored the nature of language and reality, and saw more truth in symbolism than in a literal understanding of their past. The novel began to focus on the nature of historical change, with themes often set in the past rather than in the contemporary world. Given the falsehoods disseminated by dictatorships or monopoly parties, and the abuses committed by them, the nature of reality became a major literary theme. Nevertheless, Latin American literature, and Mexican in particular, not only continued to respond to European and North American themes and techniques, but also took a leading part in new developments.

Fernando del Paso's novel, *Noticias del Imperio* (1987), applied the techniques of late twentieth-century fiction to this subject. Here, the historical novel receives a treatment far removed from its early nineteenth-century antecedents. As a writer of fiction, the author's overriding concern is the nature of the novel. This concern explained the approach Del Paso took to the subject of the French Intervention, the Mexican Second Empire, and the implacable opposition of Juárez to them. Nevertheless, his intention was to draw on both historical sources and literary forms, and thereby bind together the intrinsic qualities of these different processes of discovering what the reality, always elusive, might be. Borges's ambivalence towards historical accuracy, truth and reality appears here, as it also does in the Fuentes novel of 1990. Fiction in the period of 1915–47 had taken the Revolution as a source of inquiry. Del Paso went back earlier to examine the meaning of the Reform, the Empire, and the legacy of Juárez. Finally, Fuentes returned to the era of Independence. In this way, Mexican fiction dealt retrospectively with the three pillars of traditional historiography – Revolution, Reform, and Independence. However, the departure from the realism of the novel of the Revolution could not be more striking. With Yáñez's *Al filo del agua* as the starting point, surrealism took over from the historical novel. Fuentes transformed Independence into an *opera bufa*, bizarre and impossible to take seriously at any level, except in terms of the disastrous attempt to eliminate Spain from Spanish America. For this self-mutilation, Spanish America still pays the penalty. Del Paso viewed Reform and Intervention through the confused memory and hallucinations of a deranged Carlota. Madness became transposed on to history, which thereby was transformed by it in ceaselessly shifting perspectives.

Mexican Cinema

The development of a Mexican cinema industry should be seen from two perspectives, in part artistic and in part economic. The film industry, with its organisation and techniques of production and complex labour organisation, should be seen as part of Mexico's process of industrialisation. Urban themes began in the course of the 1940s to supersede the predominantly rural-focused films, which dealt with aspects of the Revolution. Like most nascent industries in Latin America, the Mexican film industry encountered repeated competition from the more highly organized and capitalized US industry. Yet, it still managed to survive. At the same time, it provided actors for Hollywood films and a place of refuge for European political exiles and fugitives from US blacklisting after the Second World War. In many respects, the decade of the 1940s represented the climax of the Mexican classic cinema, as the strong line-up of actors, directors, cinematographers, and writers showed.

From filming notable events in the Díaz era and then episodes of the Revolution, the first Mexican film was really *El automóvil gris* (1919), directed by Enrique Rosas. The film introduced the urban gangster syndrome to Mexico, but had little impact outside the country. Silent film naturally presented no problem of language. Little incentive existed to develop a national, Spanish-language cinema until the adoption of sound at the end of the 1920s. As dubbing and sub-titling both presented serious problems in Mexico, it became urgent to develop a cinema industry at home. *Santa* (1931) was the first Mexican film with sound. *El automóvil*

gris first received a soundtrack in 1933, though this version was lost. A second version, in 1937, has survived and is still shown. The present author, for instance, saw this film in Oaxaca in February 2006.

The Mexican Revolution not only provided subject matter for the cinema but also led to unionisation of artists and workers. In 1933, for example, a *Liga de Escritores y Artistas Revolucionarios* was formed, which would support the Spanish Republic in the Civil War of 1936–9. The cinematographer, Gabriel Figueroa (1907–97), joined the *Sindicato de la Unión de Trabajadores de Estudios Cinematográficos de México*, set up in 1934, which, two years later, affiliated to Lombardo Toledano's *CTM*. During the 1930s and 1940s, Mexico developed an industry from its own rich cultural but scant financial resources. The ongoing Mexican Revolution attracted a variety of European sympathisers and also interest from the Soviet Union, engaged in a parallel, though different revolutionary process. The renowned feminist, Alexandra Kollontai (1872–1952), became Soviet Minister to Mexico in 1926–7.

The film-maker Sergei Eisenstein, disillusioned with Hollywood, stayed in Mexico for fourteen months in 1931–2. Born in Riga in 1898 and an engineer with the Red Army in 1918, he renewed contact with the muralists, particularly Rivera, who had resided in Moscow for nine months in 1927–8. Other muralists such as Orozco and Siqueiros had a profound influence on his cinematic representation in *Que Viva México!*, begun in 1930. Eisenstein wanted a realistic view of post-revolutionary Mexico, seen in the context of its history, but using contemporary visual techniques. He already had a rich cinematography – such as *Battleship Potemkin* (1925) – and theatre work behind him in the Soviet Russia of the 1920. He viewed the Mexican Revolution from the perspective of the social transformation

he had witnessed in Russia. He found Mexico more congenial than Hollywood. His scenes of town and country used no professional actors. The aim was to present to the world a Mexico more authentic than the largely unfavourable image mediated through US cinema. He received considerable support from the Mexican government at the time of filming, despite the rupture of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in January 1930.

Eisenstein returned to the Soviet Union in May 1932, but was never able to edit his film, due to commitments in the Soviet film industry – *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) and the first two parts of a trilogy of *Ivan the Terrible* (1943–5) – and subsequent difficulties with Stalin. He died in February 1948.

Mexican actors, cinematographers like Gabriel Figueroa, whose *Memorias* appeared in 2005, and directors, such as Roberto Gavaldón (1910–86), regularly gained experience in Hollywood and returned to Mexico to enrich the home industry. Some worked in both industries. Film-production had become a principal industry. Mexico's transition from a predominantly rural society through rapid urbanisation provided a ready audience for the cinema. Mexicans, in the meantime, had been attempting to coordinate production at home through a tighter studio system with both government and private participation. Alberto Pani's sponsorship of *Cinematografía Latinoamericana SA (CLASA)* in 1935 formed a major part of this process. This continued to be the most important studio into the 1940s. Its first feature was the retrospectively classic film, '*Vámonos con Pancho Villa!*' (1935), directed by Fuentes. This film, however, lost money, perhaps because of its depressing theme. Made in the Cárdenas era, when Villa still remained out of favour, the film portrayed the sad experience of

six peasants who adhered to *villismo* only to discover betrayal, cruelty and disillusionment.

Pani's agency enabled Figueroa to go to Hollywood in 1935–6 to study under the renowned photographer, Gregg Toland (d. 1948), who would later do the camera work for Orson Welles's, 'Citizen Kane' (1941). Figueroa subsequently worked with directors such as Luis Buñuel (in Mexico from 1946), John Ford, and John Huston. He provided the camera work on Ford's 'The Fugitive' (1947), from Graham Greene's novel, *The Power and the Glory* (1940), with Henry Fonda as the hunted priest in revolutionary Mexico. The film also starred the two Mexican actors, Dolores de Río and Pedro Armendáriz. Figueroa also did the camera work in the film of Azuela's *Los de Abajo* in 1940, for which the composer, Silvestre Revueltas (1899–1940) provided the music. Later, Figueroa won an Oscar for his work on Huston's 'Night of the Iguana' (1963), with Richard Burton and Ava Gardner, filmed in an, as yet, undiscovered Puerto Vallarta.

The 'Classic Age', was the 1930s and 1940s, and included the rise of stars such as Pedro Armendáriz, Dolores del Río, and María Félix. Del Río, the astonishingly beautiful actress from Durango, went to Hollywood in 1925, where she signed a contract with United Artists. However, she would be given secondary and 'foreign' roles, as in the celebrated Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers film, *Flying Down to Rio* (1933). After an affair with Orson Welles, she returned to Mexico in 1942 and worked closely with the director, Emilio 'El Indio' Fernández, with whom she also had a romance. Her reappearance in Mexico came at the right time. She could apply her experience in Hollywood to the burgeoning film industry in Mexico and also draw on home roots. She played against her star reputation in such films as *María Candelaria*, portraying a humble Indian woman, and acting

with Armendáriz. Del Rio worked primarily in the theatre during the 1960s, but returned to star as the doyenne of a brothel in *Casa de mujeres* (1966).



FILMOFONO.S.A.
PRESENTA A

Dolores DEL Rio
Y PEDRO ARMENDARIZ
en



Maria
CANDELARIA



Plate 8.4 Mexican Film Posters of the Classic Era. Three internationally known stars, Dolores del Río (1904–83), María Félix (1914–2002), and Pedro Armendáriz (1912–63), featured in films of this era. Emilio ‘el indio’ Fernández became one of the leading directors with Gabriel Figueroa the renowned cinematographer. ‘María Candelaria’ (1943) won a prize at the post-war Cannes Film Festival in 1946, a sign of international recognition for Mexican cinema. The film, set in Xochimilco (then outside Mexico City) in 1909, before the Revolution, featured the popular combination of Del Río and Armendáriz. This

winning team made four films together in 1943 and 1944. Armendáriz, who took roles in Hollywood films in the 1950s, never took the lead. His last film was the second Bond film, '*From Russia with Love*' (1963). His son became a leading actor in Mexico in the 1970s. María Félix resisted incorporation into American cinema, since Mexicans were often confined to roles playing Indians in Western films. She starred in '*Enamorada*' (1946). '*Bandida*' (1948) formed part of the popular *ranchero* films about bandits. This time a major female star took the lead, vying with Armendáriz in their conflictive relationship. Fernández was again the director. Katy Jurado (1924–2002), who in the 1950s and into the 1970s starred in many Hollywood films, worked with leading actors and directors.

Félix reputedly had lovers such as the muralists, Rivera and Orozco, and was married for a time to the composer-singer, Agustín Lara (1897–1970), and later the celebrated *ranchero* singer, Jorge Negrete (1911–53), himself a major cinematic attraction. Moving from her birthplace in Sonora to education and first marriage in Guadalajara and thence to the greater opportunities of Mexico City, María Félix made her first film in 1942 alongside Negrete. She achieved fame in Fernando de Fuentes' *Doña Bárbara* (1943), based on the Venezuelan novel by Rómulo Gallegos. Félix became notable for her portrayals of strong women who refused to be the victims of men in a culture in which men placed themselves at the centres of authority. *Enamorada* (1947), with Armendáriz, set during the Revolution, showed this conflict at its most characteristic. She never filmed in the United States, but between 1948 and 1955 acted in Spain, Italy, France, and Argentina. She continued to be active in films into the 1960s.

During the classic period, Mexican films occupied prime place in Spanish-language cinema output. Mexico City also became the film capital of Latin America in the mid-1940s, although studios operated in an uncoordinated fashion and the outstanding problem of distribution remained. Output increased during the war years, partly through the dearth of European films and partly through US sponsorship as an aspect of foreign policy designed to win Latin American support. Juárez continued to be in favour in the period of oil nationalization, and the Mexican Government cooperated in supporting the US film, *Juárez* (1939), in which ironically the Austro-Hungarian born, Paul Muni, played the title role and the Hollywood star, Bette Davis, portrayed the Empress Carlota.

The comic actor, Mario Moreno, known as *Cantínflas*, first appeared in film in 1940. It was the beginning of a huge success story, which encompassed the whole of Latin America and Europe as well. Seeing the potential, the US film company, Columbia, distributed the *Cantínflas* films worldwide. The humor transcended the problem of language and subtitling. In Mexico, in particular, new catchphrases and word contortions became daily expressions as a result of these films. This genre accompanied the development of the popular, *ranchero* musical drama, often starring Negrete or his rival, Pedro Infante (1917–57). In many respects, this was the Mexican home brand answer to the US Western, which could have no direct equivalent in Mexico in view of the differing history of the two societies. Fuentes made *Ay, Jalisco, no te rajes!* with Negrete in the lead in 1941, which achieved great popularity, especially after worldwide distribution by United Artists, but, nevertheless, represented a descent in quality for the director in response to the popular market.

The formation of Churubusco Studios in southern Mexico City in 1945 marked the attempt to coordinate production in response to increased foreign competition. Legislation in 1949 sought to coordinate the structure and performance of the industry, but contributed little to its revival. The Mexican industry could not compete with Hollywood in the post-war years, and faced US trade retaliation against any serious attempt to protect the home industry. Labor problems and an unwillingness to innovate also beset the Mexican film industry. The state assumed control over the Churubusco complex from the late 1950s, as a response to the closure of many studios earlier in the decade, but this did not have much impact on the quality of the output.

Mexican cinema hit the doldrums in the 1960s and 1970s, despite a number of highly controversial films by Buñuel, *Nazarín* (1958) and *Viridiana* (1961), the latter banned in Spain and condemned by the Vatican. Although in *Los olvidados* (1950), Buñuel had explored in stark terms the life in the impoverished in Mexico City, few Mexican films of this period dealt directly with Mexican social problems in any way comparable to the Italian neo-realism of the post-war decade. Even so, a number of important films were still being made. One of them was Julio Bracho's (1909–78) *La sombra del caudillo* (1960), from the Guzmán novel discussed earlier. Bracho, who also came from Durango, was a relative of Dolores del Río and the Mexican Hollywood star, Ramón Navarro. This film, however, proved too controversial in its portrayal of the post-Revolutionary political establishment, and was suppressed on government authority until finally shown in 1990, as the PRI regime began to open. Similarly, Gavaldón's *Rosa Blanca* (1961) was banned, because it dealt with the machinations of a US oil company to deprive a peasant proprietor of his land. Gavaldón, one

of Mexico's most capable directors, began filming in Mexico in 1944, and made two celebrated films during the 1950s, *La Escondida* (1955), which again paired the inflammatory Félix and Armendáriz, and was set during the early Madero phase of the Revolution, and *Macario* (1959). Gavaldón became one of the founders of the *Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Produccion Cinematografica*, the Union of Workers in the Cinema Industry. He usually worked in close cooperation with the novelist and scriptwriter, José Revueltas, and the cinematographer, Figueroa, although, in a new departure, he collaborated with the García Márquez, already resident in Mexico City, to film one of Rulfo's stories, *El gallo de oro* (1964). Gavaldón continued filming into the 1970s. The repression of the 1968 protest movements had a curious repercussion in Felipe Cazals' *Canoe* (1975), who focused on an event which had taken place in September. This was the murder and mutilation of four University of Puebla employees on a trip to the Puebla highlands by deluded villagers, whom the local priest had incited to believe were agents of city Communism.

In the year of financial collapse, 1982, a catastrophic fire destroyed the *Cineteca Nacional*, opened in 1974, in the southern zone of Mexico City, with the loss of thousands of reels carefully accumulated over the years and irreplaceable. Negligence appeared to be the cause. In response to the ailing condition of the industry, the government established the IMCINE (the Mexican Cinema Institute) in the following year. The revival of the Spanish film industry, after the end of the Franco dictatorship in 1975, gradually became a pole of attraction for Mexican actors, frustrated by inadequate opportunities at home. From the 1990s, Mexican directors of the calibre of Alejandro González Iñárritu, Guillermo del Toro, who won an Oscar in March 2018 for best director and picture for his fantasy, *The Shape of*

Water, and Alfonso Cuarón, have taken leading places in US cinema and competed successfully in the international film industry. Similarly, Mexican actors, such as Salma Hayek, have worked in both Mexican and US films, and Daniel Giménez Cacho and Gael García Bernal, have also acted in Spanish film with Pedro Almodóvar and in other Mexican and foreign films. Beset by repeated problems of shortage of capital and excessive bureaucracy, the industry faced the closure of popular cinemas during the 1990s and the building of expensive, multi-cinema complexes by US companies in all the main Mexican cities.

The Mexican cinema's recovery in the 1980s really began with two films in 1985. *Frida*, a popular film in Mexico, focused on the life of Frida Kahlo. Jaime Humberto Jaramillo's *Doña Herlinda y su hijo*, at the time had scant distribution in Mexico but found great international success. This film's explicitly homosexual theme marked a dramatic departure for Mexican cinema and opened a new period of more open exploration of sexual themes. It also provided a witty critique of family values and presented a subtle female predominance over the home, regardless of who were the components of the family. Thereafter, several Mexican films gained a wide international audience, and a range of new directors and actors took the industry to new heights. One of these films was María Novaro's *Danzón* (1991), in which María Rojo took the part of a single-mother telephonist in Mexico City, whose main form of entertainment is a regular visit to the dancehall, which specialises in the slow dance of Cuban origin, the *danzón*. When her usual partner unexpectedly vanishes, she goes to Veracruz in search of him. At that point a penetrating and very poetic exploration of the emotional life and identity of a middle-aged woman from the urban lower middle class begins. The dance theme linked this film to

those of an earlier generation but also stamped the modern industry with a distinct style and originality. Salma Hayek became a star in Mexico with *El callejón de los milagros* (1993), a transposition of Naguib Mafouz's *Cairo Trilogy* to the back streets of Mexico City. Innovative and popular though such films were, perennial problems of production, quality and distribution, and the swamping of the country with US films of varying type, continued to hamper the home industry. An under-utilized actress like the expressive Gabriela Roel, found, nevertheless, a magnificent role in the long-lasting TV serial, *Callejón de sombras* (1997–8), with Giménez Cacho and Demián Bichir, which explored the inner workings of the drug trade and its penetration of the army and judicial processes.

In Del Toro's first major film, *Cronos* (1993), an old man, played by Federico Lippi, discovers an alchemist's box, dating from the colonial era, which bestows eternal life if fed with blood. The director applied several techniques of popular cinema to this curious vampire film. Del Toro later directed the Hollywood film, *Mimic* (1997) and then the Spanish film, *El espinazo del diablo* (*The Devil's Backbone*) (2002), set in the Republican zone in the Civil War. Cuarón has equally worked in both Mexico and the United States, directing Gwyneth Paltrow and Robert De Niro in *Great Expectations* (1997) and Gael García Bernal in *Y tu Mamá también* (2001), as well as one of the Harry Potter grouping. Mexican films also tapped the popular international market with Alfonso Arau's *Cómo agua para chocolate* (1991), based on the popular novel by Laura Esquivel, which although focused to a limited extent on the Revolution, had none of the depth of treatment of the older films on that subject.

Rising through the Mexican film industry, Gael García Bernal, has continued to rise from *Amores Perros* (2000) (loosely translated as 'Love's

a Bitch’) onwards and upwards. British Academy of Film and Television Awards gave this film, directed by González Iñárritu, its Best Foreign Film in 2002. García Bernal has shown his mettle in a series of widely differing roles from *Y tu Mamá también*, to *El crimen de Padre Amaro*, (2002), a Mexican version of Eça de Queiroz's Portuguese novel of 1875, in which he was the young priest, and Pedro Almodóvar's *La Mala Educación* (2004). In this film, which focused on priestly abuse of minors, García Bernal played three roles, one of which was a transvestite. Then came Walter Salles’ *The Motorcycle Diaries* (2004), in which he portrayed the twenty-three-year-old Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara, a Buenos Aires medical student, whose journey of discovery through the poverty and suffering in South America transformed him into a revolutionary.

Vibrant though the Mexican industry can be – and capable of producing a striking range of talent from actors to cinematographers and directors, composers and writers – its foundations still remain precarious in the home country.

9

The Changing Face of the Republic, 2000–2019



The Uneven Pattern of the Economy

In this period, two major new developments were the advances in the Mexican automobile industry and in aerospace. By 2015, Mexico had overtaken Brazil in annual vehicle production, and was the seventh world producer. This industry had originated in the 1960s, primarily as an auto-assembly subsidiary of the major international companies, such as Volkswagen in Puebla and, from 2010, in Guanajuato, and Nissan in Aguascalientes. The availability of a skilled labour force and trained technicians and managers, particular in the northern states, enabled Mexico to take advantage of the NAFTA Treaty to supply the US market. Car exports in the middle of the 2000s also went to the European Union, Canada, other Latin American markets and to Asian markets, including Japan, China, India, and South Korea, but continued to be beset by ups and downs, not least in the domestic market.

The aerospace industry originated in the mid-2000s. The number of companies that were involved trebled since 2007, with concentrations in specific areas, particularly the northern states of Nuevo León, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Baja California, much of them involved in manufacturing components for the European Airbus. In central Mexico, the expanding industrial city of Querétaro became another major area, with US foreign direct investment (FDI) accounting for nearly half the total. Between January 2009 and March 2015, sixty aerospace FDI projects had been recorded in Mexico involving thirty-eight companies of diverse origin, including France and Canada as well as the United States. The total capital

invested reached US\$3 billion and it was estimated that some 7,400 jobs resulted. The industry drew from the pool of skilled labour, particularly among persons with engineering degrees, available in Mexico. Querétaro and Chihuahua emerged as the two principal locations: the former specialized in engine components, turbine design, and computer-controlled machine devices, and the latter in parts and components, surface-finishing, fuselage wings, interiors, electrical wiring, safety, and water systems, befitting from proximity to the United States. This represents a new and dynamic sector of the economy open to private and foreign investment and with clearly identified markets. In many respects, it reveals an image of Mexico far beyond traditional notions.

In terms of annual real growth of GDP, Mexico grew from 0.3 per cent in 2001 to a peak of 4.6 per cent in 2006, but dropped to 1.3 per cent in 2008 and fell drastically into recession in 2009, when the economy contracted by 6.5 per cent, in response to the US recession. Oil prices fell 21 per cent compared to 2008. This was comparable to the contraction in 1995. The dramatic nature of the recession could be seen, when compared to the 3.8 per cent shrinkage of a previously rapidly expanding Brazilian economy in 2015, the worst since 1981, with a resulting political crisis at the presidential level. In the late 2000s, 80 per cent of Mexico's exports went to the United States. This connection exposed the Mexican economy to considerable danger. After 2009, however, Mexico made a strong recovery from recession. By 2012, the real annual growth rate had risen to 3.9 per cent. Even so, FDI still fell by 35 per cent over the previous year, and the economy was performing below par during 2013, with GDP growth down to 1.2 per cent and a sharp rise in the country's trade deficit. The peso dropped to the low level of 13.50 to the US dollar in February 2013, as part

of a general depreciation of Latin American currencies. Even so Moody's ratings agency upgraded Mexican sovereign debt to A3 on the promise of impending structural reforms to be implemented by the Peña Nieto administration.

During the first quarter of 2016, the Mexican economy grew at an annual rate of 3.2 per cent, when the Brazilian economy continued in recession. Thereafter, it slipped down to below 2.5 per cent, due to a slowdown in the mining industry, contraction in the construction industry, the collapse of three leading house-building firms, and the impact of US economic problems. The peso had already fallen to 19 to the US dollar in mid-February. Weaker US growth, continued fall in oil prices, and volatile capital flows led to the IMF downgrading the growth rate for 2016 to 2.5 per cent. Yet, these fluctuations resulted not only from continued structural problems but also from Mexico's increasing integration, as an open economy, into the wider international economy. Foreign investors were already significantly participating; exchange rates were flexible, and the fiscal deficit at the relatively low proportion of just over 4 per cent of GDP, with the government aim of bringing it down even further by 2018.



Plate 9.1 Contemporary Mexico City. Many examples of the late modernist architecture of the twentieth century, including the Stock Exchange, epitomising the revival of capitalism in the opening economy from the 1980s onward. The *Bolsa mercantil* (Stock Exchange), represented the showpiece of the Carlos Salinas era (1988–94), which culminated in the ratification the NAFTA Treaty in 1993. The domestic crash of December 1994 shook the Mexican financial system but it recovered until hit by the US banking crisis of 2008, from which it gradually began to recover in subsequent years. Oil dependency has accounted for recent exchange rate fluctuations and a weakening of national-government flexibility in the mid-2010s

(Photo by M. A. Anipkin)

Despite these uncertainties, the seasonally adjusted level of unemployment fell to its lowest since 2005 at 3 per cent in mid-2017, and, so far, the expected trend is downward. The inflation rate seems to have peaked at 6.7 per cent in August 2017, and the forecast is that it should fall further, perhaps to 3 per cent, which is the official target, during 2018. The

consumer price index, however, remained high at the end of 2017, due to increased gas prices. Furthermore, the estimated economic growth rate has been pushed downward: the IMF forecast a 1.9 per cent growth rate for GDP, as opposed to its earlier estimate of 2 per cent for the year 2018.

Serious structural problems remain. As the London-based *Latin America Regional Report: Mexico and NAFTA* has recently discussed, Mexico is still a low-wage economy, a situation which depresses purchasing power in a weak internal market and diminishes prospects for economic growth. Few have access to financial services. Added to that, 60 per cent of the labour force at the beginning of 2018 still works in the informal sector. Of the 800,000 new jobs created during the year 2017, only 61 per cent of these turned out to be full-time and with an adequate salary, Mexico does have an official minimum wage at US\$150 per month, which is still too low to cover most basic necessities. This minimum wage is the third lowest in Latin America, above only Nicaragua and Venezuela. Of all thirty-five members of the OECD, this is the lowest. Conscious of the need to stimulate the internal market, Mexico's main business organisation (COPARMEX) called for an increase of the minimum wage by 19 per cent.

Recent Antecedents

The Fox and early Calderón administrations in 2000–8 benefited from a largely stable and expanding economy during the years from 2000 until the economic crisis originating in the United States in 2008. The economy remained vulnerable to weaknesses and fluctuations there. The precarious condition of the US economy – with a trade deficit running at \$60 billion a month in the first half of 2005 – threatened to destabilise not just the Mexican economy but the global financial order as well. The major banking crisis in the United States in 2008–9 would throw the world economy into turmoil.

Higher oil prices benefited Mexico considerably, as they enabled further expenditure on education or health. The business orientation of the administration did not lead to radical changes, as policies favouring the private sector had already been set in motion under Salinas. In many respects, the Fox administration, despite the change of party in power, represented in practice little change with respect to economic policy.

The picture, however, was not entirely rosy, especially in view of the far-reaching implications of continued government dependence on oil revenues. In 2000, the Mexican government still took 37 per cent of its total revenue from the oil industry, dominated by the state-owned PEMEX. Each fall of US\$1 per barrel in the export price of Mexican oil could cause the Mexican Treasury to lose US\$600 or more in revenue. The bulk of Mexican oil went to the US market. In 2004, for instance, Mexico exported 1.87 million barrels of crude oil per day, of which 1.65 million barrels per day

(bpd) went to the United States. Since 1998, Mexico, although not a member of OPEC, has cooperated with Venezuela and Saudi Arabia, for the purpose of securing higher oil prices. The export price of Mexican crude had risen from a low of US\$6 per barrel in 1998 to US\$12.45 barrel price (bp) in 1999. The average export price for 2001 reached US\$19.3 bp and in March 2002 US\$20 bp, when the Mexican government had budgeted for a price of US\$17 bp. This rise generated unease in the United States, especially in view of the deteriorating situation with regard to Iraq. While keeping its foreign policy distinct from that of the United States on the Iraq question, the Mexican government watched the country's average oil export price rise to US\$24.6 bp during the first half of 2003. It rose to US\$38.13 bp in March 2004, when the administration had budgeted for a price of US\$20 bp.

A high proportion of Mexican oil output, nevertheless, remained in the country to fuel development. This had been an overriding objective of the Cárdenas administration's nationalization of the industry in 1938. Total oil production came to 3.38 million bpd in 2004, and was expected to rise to 3.8 million bpd by the end of 2006. Although no Mexican administration has so far dared to dismantle PEMEX, the need to develop further off-shore fields has raised the question of where the investment would come from for further and much needed expansion. This raised the question of the possible entry of private, and even foreign, capital into the industry's investment structure. Such a course, however, continued to have profound political implications.

As PEMEX paid a tax rate of 62 per cent to the Mexico State, it did not possess sufficient available capital on its own for significant investment projects. That, in turn, has focused discussion around energy reform, which

by 2005–6 had already become a major – and controversial – issue. Given the buoyancy of oil export prices, the Fox administration was prepared to lower the tax rate to 55 per cent, a policy which would need congressional approval. The Mexican Senate opposed on principle any government measure designed to relax PEMEX's monopoly over off-shore oil development. The need for investment to maintain and increase production levels, however, led to PEMEX's authorization of foreign companies to operate during the second half of 2005 in the northern Veracruz off-shore fields, particularly Chicontepec, where geological conditions presented serious difficulties. In 2006, this would extend to other fields as well. PEMEX's Director argued that production could double to 7 million bpd, if the investment were available. If it were not, the Energy Minister darkly warned early in 2005, then production would fall in the near future to the extent that after twelve years or so, Mexico might find itself in the dire position of having to import crude oil. To date, these energy issues have not been resolved. Most administrations shied away from reform of the energy sector through fear of the political repercussions. Mexico's loss of its former position as the second source of US imports (after Canada) in 2003 gave rise to further concern. In relative terms, Mexican exports to the US had been steadily falling, despite overall growth. The growth, however, was too slow, and was largely accounted for by oil exports at high prices. As a result, China overtook Mexico and became the second supplier to the USA. In 2004, China supplied 14 per cent of US imports and surpassed Japan as the country with the largest trade surplus with the United States. In many respects, the United States has depended on continued Chinese and other Asian buying of its bonds and equities to shore up its trade deficit. The continued strength of the peso further inhibited Mexican exportation. China

was able to undercut Mexico in the US market, because of state subsidies to its export industries and manipulation of the exchange rate. The Chinese lead over Mexico in the US market seems likely to increase. Mexico, at the same time, was facing Chinese competition in textiles in its domestic market.

During the second half of Fox's term, job creation became an overriding political issue. Although the administration attributed job losses in Mexico to the US economic slowdown after 2000–1, it was also clear that the Mexican economy was failing to create a sufficient number of new jobs. From the middle of 2003, industrial output – and with it, consumer spending – declined. It had become clear that the economy could not produce sustained growth. As a result, unemployment remained a persistent problem in the capital and Monterrey and the other main industrial cities.

The Troubled Energy Sector and Political Responses

The key issue is reform of the status and working arrangements of PEMEX. This has been a growing problem for decades, but falling international oil prices in 2014–16 – and therefore the prospect of declining government revenues – has brought it to a head. Oil revenues have continued to supply 35 per cent of government revenue. Collapsing oil prices threatened State expenditure on education, welfare, infrastructure, and other projects, all of which are vital for the country's transformation. State dependence, however, has had negative consequences for the industry. It had led to concentration on the export of crude oil, lack of investment in home refineries, and serious under-capitalization of exploration for new fields, particularly deep-sea deposits.

In this respect, there are two outstanding problems. First, Mexico's existing fields are expected to run out. There were no new discoveries between 2004 and 2009, and the huge Cantarell field discovered in the 1970s passed its peak in 2004. In that year, Mexico produced a peak level of 3.4 million barrels per day; in 2010, this had fallen to 2.6 million bpd, and by the third quarter of 2013 to 2.4 million bpd. Export of crude oil, valued at US\$40.9 billion in 2010, fell to US\$30.5 billion in the following year. By 2008, Mexican had fallen to fourth in the table of suppliers of crude oil to the USA, after Canada, Venezuela, and Saudi Arabia, and only just ahead of Nigeria. Second, Mexico imports 50 per cent of its fuel, including refined oil and most of its gas. By 2009, the cost had risen to

US\$20.4 billion. This has increased PEMEX's indebtedness to an alarming degree, especially taking into account salaries and pensions. The Calderón administration from 2008, and after 2012 the Peña Nieto government, have sought solutions to these overwhelming problems on many levels. Nationalist suspicions of an impending privatization and Union opposition to reforms, despite affiliation with the PRI, have considerably impeded their resolution. The oil industry has provided a considerable source of employment in the states of Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Tabasco, Campeche, and Chiapas. Oil accounted for 80.2 per cent of all production in the State of Campeche in 2016, and 58.8 per cent in Tabasco. These five states, with some of the highest poverty levels in the Republic, have usually benefitted from federal transfer of resources to their governments for the encouragement of development projects. Falling prices plunged the State of Veracruz, for example, into financial crisis during the mid-term election year of 2016. When combined with corruption, violence, and mismanagement, those factors together cost the PRI the state governorship.

Private companies began to enter the energy sector for the first time since nationalization in 1938 during the latter part of 2011 under the Calderón administration as subcontractors. They invested in three fields exploited since 1960. One of the companies, the UK-based PETROFAC Facilities Management secured a twenty-five-year contract to invest US\$500 million in two on-shore blocs. The Mexican Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of such contracts on 16 August 2011, despite opposition in the Chamber of Deputies. Major oil discoveries in the Gulf of Mexico late in 2012 increased the urgency of reform in the hydrocarbon sector, because of the high cost of deep-sea extraction. Proven oil resources point to a reserve of 11.4 million barrels, should they be exploited.

Accordingly, there was a desperate need for deep-water drilling, in which, by contrast PETROBRAS excelled. PEMEX had so far been unable to tap these deep-water reserves through lack of sufficient capital and technical expertise.

The Peña Nieto administration's reforms aspired to use the Brazilian example as a model for the integration of private investment with a state-controlled company. Both countries, however, shared a common problem of corruption, to which the escalation of violence in Mexico since the early 2000s should be added. Poor education levels in the schools, as we shall see in the following section, also held Mexico back. The energy reform package of August 2013 looked towards an increase in the economic growth rate, which lagged behind those of China and India, and an accompanying rise in living standards. The government insisted that public ownership of oil and gas deposits – under Article 27 of the 1917 Constitution – would remain a constant principle. At the same time, it wanted to clear the way for private, and even foreign private, investment in the energy sector. Such an objective would require a constitutional reform. The energy reform was to be accompanied by fiscal reform in the following month, designed to increase tax revenues and reverse tax evasion, thereby relieving state pressure on PEMEX. Despite opposition from the PRD and from Andrés Manuel López Obrador, at the head of a new Left coalition known as *Movimiento de Regeneración Nacional* (MORENA), the Chamber of Deputies approved the reforms. In December, the energy reforms were also approved.

The aim of the Peña Nieto Energy Reform has been to attract new investors into the hydrocarbon sector, with the object of applying technical expertise in a new collaboration between private companies and a state corporation. It was not intended to be denationalization but public–private

cooperation in high-cost development projects. This practice was to be spread through the oil, gas, electricity, and telecommunications industries, where capital and expertise were in dire need. Initially, a major obstacle to the success of such a program was the fall of world oil prices just at the time when the Mexican government was attempting to coax international investors into the hitherto-closed hydrocarbon sector.

The first tender for fourteen blocks in shallow water, requiring less extraction risk and fewer financial and technical resources, was offered for auction in August 2014. In effect, this modified the long state monopoly of gas and oil production and electricity generation and distribution. This policy marked a significant departure from the economic nationalism of the era from 1938 to the 1980s. Bold as it appeared, falling international oil prices depressed potential investors' demand. The fall meant that in the first nine months of 2014, PEMEX lost US\$10.9 billion in income. Only two of the projected contracts were awarded. This lack of investor interest had serious economic and political consequences for the administration.

A second phase of licensing auctions began in November 2015, when twenty-four electricity and gas plants were offered, along with five gas pipelines and three gas redistribution plants. Three foreign companies – Italian, United States, and Argentine-led – took up the offers. Altogether, the Mexican government secured investments valued at US\$12.5 billion. The third auction took place in mid-December 2015, in which all of the twenty-five bids for on-shore hydrocarbon blocks were taken up, twenty by Mexican firms. They included seventeen crude-oil fields and nine gas deposits, across Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Tabasco, Chiapas, and Nuevo León. The fourth phase, throughout 2016, involved deep-water blocks, potentially lucrative but involving heavy investment in technology, because their depth

ranged from 1,500 to 3,500 m. 169 blocks were to be offered in several tenders for exploration and production.

Much of the electricity generated by the Federal Electricity Commission (CFE) came from natural gas, but at a high cost. The aim of the reform was to allow private participation in generation and sale in what had been a state monopoly, and to make the electricity market competitive. Capital and expertise were needed, as in the oil and gas sectors, in order to enable innovation; at the same time, the appointments procedure would be overhauled. The Mexican State would, nevertheless, retain control of the national grid for security reasons. A National Energy Control Center (CENACE) would monitor the wholesale market in order to ensure fair competition and the transparency of CFE operations. The outstanding problem in Mexico continued to be the absence of natural gas pipelines in a large part of the country. The government planned to increase such lines by 75 per cent by 2018 in cooperation with private financing and operation. The CFE and PEMEX, in accordance with the reforms, were to link together the natural gas and electricity sectors.

Many problems still remained. High on the list for attention would be the expansion of oil-refining in the country, hitherto largely confined to Tula, Salamanca, and Salina Cruz (on the Pacific coast), and to lower costs. Wastage and illicit tapping of pipelines still required elimination. By early 2018, this had become another major problem facing the federal authorities. The high cost of petrol (in comparison to the USA) at the pump created a market for clandestine gasoline for drivers and domestic consumers by tapping into the oil pipelines across the country. This had been the case in the states of Sonora, Tamaulipas, Mexico, and Puebla.

Although later in 2016, international oil prices began to move slightly upward, low prices had already led to national budget cuts and the starving of investment. Overall, the objective of the Reform Package of 2013–14 was to increase productivity in all sectors of the economy. This had, in fact, declined at an average rate of 0.7 per cent over the thirty years period since 1985. The economic growth rate, closely related to this, had averaged only a moderate 2.4 per cent, over the same period. When compared to the growth rates of Chile or South Korea, for instance, Mexico's lag could be seen. How these difficulties could be overcome was the prevailing issue for the latter half of the 2010s. Much depended on whether the reforms could be actually implemented. If not, an alternative had to become apparent.

During 2017, further bidding rounds for tenders were taking place. Given the recovery of world oil prices, these resulted in considerable success. Out of a total of twenty-four onshore blocs offered, twenty-one tenders were awarded, which was expected to generate around US\$2 billion and produce some 800,000 bpd of crude oil on top of the 2 million bpd, the figure for production in September 2017. The National Hydrocarbon Commission has acted as an independent authority and is regarded as transparent. A third round of tendering, this time for oil and natural gas exploration, was expected on 31 January 2018, with further tenders for shale oil and gas leases.

The purpose, nature, and extent of the energy reforms understandably became an issue in the presidential election campaign of July 2018. There is a clear discrepancy between the view of foreign investors and perspectives within the Mexican political processes, the Press, and public opinion. Even so, the scale of investment in no way resembles the controversial nature of foreign involvement in natural resources and public utilities at the end of

the Díaz period. The political responses are unlikely to resemble those which contributed to the economic nationalism of the revolutionary years from 1910 to 1940. Even so, the election victory of MORENA could possibly lead to close governmental examination of the tenders, in order to remove any suspicion of corruption.

Mexican Society – Transformation Plus Entrenchment

By 2018, the total population of the Mexican Republic approached 120 million inhabitants in the thirty-one states of the federal system. One-quarter of this total lived in the Federal District of Mexico City and its immediate environs, which in 2016 was raised to statehood with its own constitution.

The perceptible expansion of a middle class with rising living standards accompanied, however, the persistence of widespread poverty. Although levels of extreme poverty slightly decreased in this broader period from 10 per cent to 9 per cent of the population by 2014, levels of poverty actually increased. Between 2006 and 2012, the poverty rate rose from 44.5 per cent of the population to 46.2 per cent, giving a total of 52 million people living in poverty in Mexico. In three of the poorest states, Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Guerrero, 40 per cent of the population, according to figures for March 2012, still derived their main source of income from agriculture. The contrast to the richer and more industrialised northern states, such as Nuevo León, or the Federal District, was striking. The above figures revealed the failure of government-inspired poverty-alleviation policies. This explained the limited capacity of the domestic market to provide a growing stimulus to production. Much of consumer demand was, in any case, absorbed by the informal sector, which was highly visible across most of the Republic. The large size of this informal sector, furthermore, deprived the State of much needed revenue. Both the Calderón and Peña

Nieto administrations, despite their different political complexions, sought to deal with this issue, although with little success so far. In the formal sector, a substantial and qualified workforce had developed, and manufacturing costs remained relatively low. Workers in the informal sector, however, were not eligible for social security assistance through the State IMSS scheme, which thereby left a large section of the population without health protection. All of this brought home yet again the failure of the economy to create sufficient fresh employment to absorb available labour.

Between 2006 and 2012, the economically active population rose by 14.5 per cent to nearly 51 million people. Unemployment, however, also rose from 1.6 million to 2.47 million. Those with higher education often found no possibility of suitable work. In effect, most people employed worked in low-grade jobs. The informal sector continued to be the faster growing, accounting for nearly 27 per cent of the total employed in 2005 and nearly 30 per cent by 2012.

Figures in August 2008 indicated that 14.38 million Mexicans with jobs were registered with the IMSS. In June of that year, Congress and the Supreme Court approved the Calderón administration's reform of the pension system, the ISSSTE. This raised the minimum retirement age, increased premiums, and extended the number of years which employees paid into the fund.

Current labour legislation derived largely from the 1970s, even though successive administrations from the late 1980s had begun the process of economic liberalization. Low productivity rates continued to plague the production processes. The Calderón administration's projected reform of the labour laws became stalled in Congress, where both Houses were controlled

by the PRI, as a result of election victories in July 2012, for two months before final approval on 13 November in the last weeks of the PAN government. It provided for greater accountability by the Unions, most of which were affiliated to the PRI. When that Party regained power in the following month, everything depended on the incoming government's willingness to pursue the reform.

Right at the heart of Mexico's social problems lay the time-old problem of backwardness in relation to the developed countries. This threw the focus on the educational system. Considerable advances had been made in the half-century from 1950 to 2000 in extending formal education from primary to graduate levels across the population. The estimated literacy rate in 2009 came to 93.4 per cent of the population. UNESCO figures estimated in 2013 that an eight fold increase in the total number of students took place, that is, from 3.25 million to 28.22 million pupils. By 2011–12, the total reached 34.8 million pupils at all levels. This meant that 40 per cent of the population was receiving formal education. Higher education expanded substantially between 1971 and 2000: a six fold increase took the total from 290,000 students to 1.9 million in 2000, and 3.5 million by 2013. Private higher education greatly expanded from the year, 2000, although many private universities were basically low-quality colleges primarily dedicated to accountancy and business administration. One million students were educated in the private sector by 2013, up from 400,000 students in 2006.

The Mexican government allotted over 6 per cent of the GDP to education, slightly below the OECD average for thirty countries. In 2016, as much as 90.8 per cent of school children were educated in public rather than in private schools. These schools were administered either by the

federal or the state governments. A pre-school year was compulsory for infants. Primary education was compulsory and free of charge for all children aged between six and twelve years of age. Secondary education was compulsory up to the age of fourteen and free of charge in the public sector up to the age of eighteen years. Only 62 per cent of children, however, attended secondary school. For university education in the public sector, fees remained minimal. OECD conclusions in 2012 on the subject of the Mexican educational system proved to be pessimistic with regard to the quality of education. A total of 55 per cent of pupils were found to be below competence in mathematics, 47 per cent in science, and 41 per cent in reading. The high school drop-out rate was 20 per cent and the higher education rate was 40 per cent. A wide variation of quality differentiated the various states, with the lowest levels of achievement in Guerrero, Tabasco, and Chiapas. All of this pointed to the need for a reassessment of teacher-training, revision of the curriculum, and a more professional recruitment and method of promotion. The Teachers' Union sedulously opposed any such reforms.

Domination of the teaching profession by the powerful *Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación* (SNTE), led since 1989 by the aggressive and politically aspirant, Elba Esther Gordillo, life president since July 2007, posed a major problem for all administrations. This has been the largest Trade Union in Latin America with over 1,400,000 members. Federal funds were usually diverted from the schools to the Union itself, which allocated 93 per cent of them to teachers' salaries, which in 2013 were relatively low at M\$3,000 pesos per month (or less in poorer states), which would be US\$224. The starting annual salary in 2016 would be US\$14,302, that is, half the OECD average. The average teacher would

work 800 hours per year over forty-two weeks, above the OECD average of 762 hours over 38 weeks. 60.5 per cent of them would have a university degree and another 23.3 per cent had attended training college. More than half of Mexican teachers were women. Any suggestion of reform of the profession would be met with protest and obstruction, such as took place in the centre of Oaxaca City for six months in 2006. Most administrations shied away from the issue for that reason.

Gordillo had risen through the PRI but aligned with Fox in 2000 and split the PRI in the election of 2006, when she threw her support behind Calderón. Thereafter, she became an embarrassment to the PAN administration, opposing the Secretary for Education, Josefina Vázquez Mota, who had been a key political figure in managing Calderón's election campaign. This administration failed to dislodge the SNTE from its controlling position in primary and secondary education. The Union has since the 1990s controlled more than 50 per cent of teacher appointments.

The rival Union, *Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de Educación* (CNTE), which originated in 1979, opposed Gordillo's dominance but still opposed reform with militancy. Its strength lay in the southern states, particularly Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Michoacán.

Peña Nieto's administration in 2013 put educational reform at the centre of its political goals, concentrating on primary and secondary education. The Law of 25 February, ratified by the Senate early in September, prohibited teachers from taking secondary jobs to supplement their income, provided for an entrance examination to new or vacant posts, and created the INEE as the institutional instrument for managing reform. The centrepiece of the reforms was government assessment of the quality of the teachers every four years, which for both Unions was tantamount to

heresy. There were to be regular competence tests in the public sector. The reforms also deprived the unions of the power to hire teachers. The day after the Law was passed, officers of the Attorney General's office, the PGR, arrested Gordillo, who was charged with embezzlement of Union funds, and put in the Acatitla women's prison. This escalated SNTE protests in the southern states. The CNTE, however, supported the arrest but continued to oppose the reforms. The government brought in the Federal Police to ensure that the assessments took place in mid-November 2015.

The inescapable quandary after the publication of the reforms was simply – would they ever be implemented? These reform proposals led to the CNTE's call for indefinite strikes. In August and September 2013, the union organised marches and demonstrations in opposition to the teacher evaluation scheme proposed by the Peña Nieto administration. On 18 August 2016, some 100,000 participants occupied the Mexico City *zócalo* in front of the Presidential Palace. Protests such as this delayed Congress's passage of another crucial reform, the government's Energy Reform, as we shall see, was eventually passed on 1 September.

The quality of tertiary education, however, still remained a problem in the latter half of the 2010s. There is still a lack of access to quality higher education, with private schools gaining the edge over public sector schools because of their better preparation of candidates for entrance. This is even the case with UNAM. Higher education is a mixture of the 2,000 private and 800 public higher-education institutes for the 3.6 million students in it during the year, 2017. Even so, under 17 per cent of the Mexican population have a university degree.

Persistent Violence: Drug Cartels and Political Responses

Mexico, in common with Colombia and other Latin American countries, continued to object to the US's policy of 'certification' as demeaning. By this policy the United States, the principal consumer of narcotics, attributed to itself the right to pass moral judgements on other countries, which consumed them to a far less degree. They happened to be the producers or the transit channels of the narcotics traffic. In March 2000, the US 'certified' that both Mexico and Colombia (amongst a total of twenty-six countries) were cooperating in the struggle against drug trafficking. 'Certification' meant that they would not be liable to sanctions by the United States.

Baja California Norte had been at that time one of the most violent places in Mexico as a result of the drugs trade. The *Cartel de Tijuana*, originating in the early 1980s and run by the Arellano Félix brothers, who were well-educated and fluent in English, dominated the trade in the border city, had contacts among Mexico's wealthy, and maintained a hideaway across the border in San Diego. Originally contrabandists, the group had graduated into narcotics. This cartel continued in the early 2000s to struggle for supremacy with the *Cartel de Sinaloa*, a rival mafia under Vicente 'El Mayo' Zambada and Joaquín 'El Chapo' Guzmán, and the Ciudad Juárez gang.

During the first months of 2002, the US and Mexico governments made parallel moves against the Tijuana Cartel in both countries. FBI

arrests in San Diego curbed money laundering and hit the financial base of the Cartel's cross-border operations. A shoot-out with police in Mazatlán in February probably resulted in the death of Ramón Arellano Félix. On 9 March, units of the Army arrested Benjamín Arellano Félix in Puebla. Leadership of the cartel, which still continued in existence, passed, more than likely, to one of their sisters.

The US State Department International Narcotics Control Strategy stated that in the first half of 2005, 90 per cent of the cocaine consumed in the USA came from Mexico, and that Mexico remained the second-largest supplier of heroin. The DEA identified the main source of the transit problem to the Mexican border states, and proposed to increase its total number of agents operating inside Mexico from thirty-two to possibly over forty. This was always a delicate matter for the Mexican government.

Several deeply rooted problems have emerged from the expansion of the narcotics trade and the widespread violence associated with it from the beginning of the twenty-first century. Perhaps the most crucial of these have been the relationship between the narco-economy and the economy generally, and between the drug cartels, the forces of law and order, and the political processes at municipal and state levels. The most striking, and yet obvious, issue is the international dimension of the *narco*-traffic. This latter question affects relations between the United States and Mexico to a large degree. From the Mexican perspective, the trade and the violence it brings result from the apparently insatiable demand for drugs in the United States. The US Government's Office of National Drug Control policy was, however, attempting to reduce consumption by spending large sums on education and treatment, and by the establishment of a National Prevention Strategy in 2011. The aim for 2010–15 was a 15 per cent fall in drug use.

However, easy access to firearms in the United States explains, in the Mexican view, how the cartels secure their weaponry. The fear in the United States is that the violence in Mexico, particularly in the northern states, would spill over the border. That has given rise to a view expressed in some circles in Washington that Mexico might be described as a ‘failed state’. Both governments have rebutted such a view.

Although well aware that the large-scale drug-usage in the United States fuelled gang warfare in Mexico, political authorities in the United States, whether at federal or state level, showed a remarkably poor understanding of Mexico's historical development and the country's sensitivities. The ‘failed state’ notion acquired another dimension in 2010–11, when some US political figures described the armed bands fighting one another and the authorities as an ‘insurgency’, favouring a comparison with the Colombia of the 1970s or Central America of the 1980s. When the then Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, made such a comparison in September 2010, it had to be retracted immediately by the Assistant Secretary. This misleading idea took the drug war to a supposedly political level, which was largely absent in reality, and, furthermore, appeared to Mexico to disparage the political Insurgency, which in the 1810s had laid the foundations of Mexican Independence from Spain in 1821. President Calderón roundly rejected such an interpretation on the grounds that organized crime was responsible for the drug battles. Striking as Mexican conditions seemed over the border in the United States, the murder rate in Mexico still remained half the figure for Brazil.

By the second half of the 2000s, the principal areas of widespread cartel activity were in the states of Sinaloa, Chihuahua, where Ciudad Juárez became the ‘murder-capital’ of the Republic, Tamaulipas, Veracruz,

Michoacán, Guerrero, and Oaxaca, a broad range of northern, Gulf, and southern states. A major danger was the emergence of no-go areas for the official power and the spreading of influence by the cartels through local administration. After he took office in December 2006, Calderón sought to confront them by deploying units of the Army in a range of northern states most affected by the violence. This escalated conflict and the murder rate rose strikingly. It has been estimated that as many as 12,000 persons were killed by the rival gangs between December 2006 and August 2009. The Army had been deployed in ten states, including centre-western states like Michoacán, which had become an epicentre of cartel activity, where the group known as '*La familia michoacana*', which had originated in the 1980s, was battling for supremacy with '*Los zetas*'. This group originated in March 2010, split from the Gulf Cartel and thereafter controlled much of the eastern and southern area drug trade in the country. Their activities extended to kidnapping, human trafficking, and extortion. Several leaders have already been arrested, notably '*El Comandante*' Alfredo Alemán Narváez, seized in Fresnillo, in November 2011, and '*Z-40*', Miguel Treviño Morales, taken in his home state of Tamaulipas in a Navy-led operation in mid-July 2013. Large swathes of territory in the low-lying *tierra caliente* and in the Pacific port of Lázaro Cárdenas, seemed to have passed out of government control. '*La familia*' specialised in decapitating its enemies, such as the six *Zetas* in Uruapan in 2006. Its activities spread into the United States, with distribution networks based in major cities such as Dallas, Atlanta, Seattle, and San Diego. In Michoacán and elsewhere, local police and municipal governments were reported to have been infiltrated by the gangs or working with them – right up to state-

government level. After December 2006, some 3,200 Federal police were operating in Michoacán.

Gang presence has frequently resulted in shoot-outs between rival cartels or with the official forces. In April 2008, one such battle between gangs left thirteen dead in the border city of Tijuana, and in May, ten ranchers were killed in Guerrero, and seven Federal police died in a grenade attack in Sinaloa's capital, Culiacán. The three border states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, and Chihuahua became by 2010 the battleground between the rival '*Los Zetas*' and '*Golfo*' cartel. In Nuevo León, hitherto peaceful, a gun battle took place in Monterrey on 27 June 2011. Overcrowding in the maximum-security Apodaca Prison, generally thought to be run by '*Los Zetas*', led to a three-day battle in mid-February 2012, in which forty-four men died and another twenty-nine broke out of jail. Such events put Nuevo León, a prime location for Mexican business, among the most violent states of the Republic.

A newer group, known as '*Los Caballeros Templarios*', emerged in Michoacán on March 2011 as a breakaway gang, to challenge the primacy of '*La familia*', in decline from mid-2011. Their leader, Nazario Moreno, '*El Chayo*', originated from a poor family in Apatzingán in the *tierra caliente*. He had begun trading while living in the United States, and became imbued with a mixture of Hollywood-style bravado and Protestant Evangelism. However, they found themselves in conflict with the '*Cartel de Jalisco – Nueva Generación*' which had begun to expand into Michoacán. Even so, the '*Caballeros*' were expanding into Guanajuato during September 2012. Both the '*Familia*' and the '*Caballeros*' set themselves up as virtual authorities, offering local inhabitants protection from the operations of out of State gangs, namely '*Los Zetas*' or the Jalisco '*Nueva*

Generación'. In Lázaro Cárdenas, the '*Caballeros*' had been running the port behind the official façade, imposing extortion rackets on the companies, and shipping out illegally large quantities of iron-ore, of which Michoacán was the largest producer in Mexico, to such markets as China, where it was in great demand. The gang also controlled the freight-transport workers' union. The value of this illegal trade has been estimated at US\$2 billion, that is, equal to half the State's budget. On 4 November 2013, the Mexican Navy seized control of the port, with the object of putting an end to these practices.

Even so, armed gangs still continued to operate across the core zones of the *tierra caliente* in Michoacán. Rural communities, for their own part, sick of gang intervention, set up their own 'self-defence forces' in the course of 2013 on the model of similar forces in Guerrero. In Michoacán, however, such forces were illegal, according to the State Constitution. The PRI State Governor denounced them for that reason. The Federal Government instructed the Federal Army on 27 January 2014 to take over full control of law and order in the *tierra caliente* under a newly appointed Federal Commissioner, a close ally of Peña Nieto. There were already 10,000 troops in the state. Twelve days later, the Federal Government ordered the incorporation of the Rural-Defence Bands into the official forces. In an attempt to coordinate resistance to the drug gangs, the Peña Nieto administration set up a National Gendarmerie in August 2014, composed of existing bodies of the Federal police and the cooptation of the rural-defence bands. Although originally supposed to consist of 40,000 men, only 5,000 were actually operating. They managed to recover control of Apatzingán and much of the *tierra caliente* in the first half of 2014.

The Sinaloa Gang continued to be the most powerful in the country under '*El Mayo*', and '*El Chapo*'. The latter had first been arrested in 1992 but escaped from the Puente Grande maximum security prison in Guadalajara in 2001. Thereafter, he became the most wanted man in Mexico. Although of short stature, hence his nickname, and older, '*El Chapo*' married an eighteen-year-old Beauty Queen from Durango in 2007. In a startling coup by the Mexican Marines, '*El Chapo*' was re-arrested in February 2014 in Mazatlán, with intelligence provided by the DEA, enabling the Peña Nieto administration to take the political credit. This time he was kept in the Altiplano prison in the state of Mexico, but, after only sixteen months in jail, '*El Chapo*' escaped once again on 11 July 2015, while Peña Nieto was on a state visit to France. This as yet unexplained event proved to be hugely embarrassing for the administration and was of considerable concern in the United States, where the fugitive was also a wanted man. The PGR, the Federal Attorney General's office, admitted that the escape through a long tunnel from the prison into an outlying property could only have been made effective by the complicity of government officials. A joint Army and Navy operation in Los Mochis, however, managed to recapture him on 8 January 2016. Immediately, the issue of extradition to the United States arose to embarrass the Mexico Government further. Although Peña Nieto at the Davos World Economic Forum explained that the PGR would speed up the process of extradition, it was clear that, beforehand, the Interior Minister, Osorio Chong, would want to delay this until the government had secured sufficient information from '*El Chapo*' to break the power of the Sinaloa Cartel. The Mexican *Amparo* Law, furthermore, prevented extradition when a prisoner was on trial in Mexico. By November 2018, he was on trial in the USA.

The ongoing struggle to subjugate these powerful armed bands threw into the background most of the projected reforms of the Peña Nieto administration. Even so, the Mexican murder rate fell from 20.3 per 100,000 in 2011 to 13.3 in 2014. This proved to be only temporary. 23,935 homicides were registered in 2016, that is, at the rate of 20 per 100,000 inhabitants, in contrast to 17 in the previous year. A total of 11,155 were already given as the total for the first five months of 2017. The murder of journalists, 114 since 2000, seemed unabated. These figures reflected badly on the administration's policy of reducing murders and disappearances. Reform of the energy sector and other measures designed to stimulate the economy were intended to recover the administration's credibility and regain the political initiative in its final years. The President's ratings, however, had sunk to low levels.

Political Parties and Elections

Fox won 42.5 per cent of the vote in the presidential election of 2 July 2000. As opinion polls had underestimated his level of support, this victory took many observers by surprise. Clearly, many voters had switched allegiance at the last minute, as the prospect of removing the PRI from power for the first time since its formation in 1946 became a possibility. The PRI took 36 per cent of the vote and the PRD 16.6 per cent. Congressional elections reduced the PRI to 211 of the 500 seats in the Lower Chamber, against 225 for pro-Fox deputies (not all of them belonging to the PAN), and 60 for the PRD. The PRI remained the largest party in the Senate, with forty-seven seats to the PAN's 40. The PRI, then, still remained a force both in congress and the country. The party controlled two (the Estado de México and Veracruz) of the five states (including the Federal District) with the largest number of congressmen and 42 per cent of the electorate. It controlled nineteen of the thirty-two stategovernorships, and began to make fresh electoral gains, particularly in Oaxaca, from October 2001. The party, however, lost Michoacán, the Cárdenas home state, to Cuauthémoc Cárdenas's son, Lázaro Cárdenas Batel of the PRD, in November. The PRD continued to hold the office of Mayor of the Federal District, the second-most important political position in Mexico after the Presidency, and in December 2000, López Obrador began a six-year term. López Obrador, left of centre, became a possible presidential candidate for the presidential elections of 2006. He had been the defeated candidate in the bitterly contested gubernatorial elections in his native Tabasco in 1994,

when the victory went to Roberto Madrazo, who after the elections of 2000 began to manoeuvre for the leadership of the PRI.



Plate 9.2 The Fox Campaign. Rally organised in Zacatecas by ‘Los Amigos de Fox’, a group organised to promote Vicente Fox's candidacy for the Presidency, on 31 July 1999. Well-heeled and well-fed *rancheros*, rural property-owners and businessmen, predominate in the picture. Fox became the first PAN President in the following year. The PAN would retain the Presidency until the election of 2012, when the PRI returned to power

(Author's photo)

After 2000, the electoral position of the PAN began to erode. Fox himself was a controversial figure within his own party and did not command the support of congressional leaders and former presidential candidates. The cabinet sought to balance an array of forces opposed to the PRI, not all of them *PAN-istas* and few of them associated with the Catholic Right.

Fox sought to reshape the image of the presidency. The contrast between Fox's general abstention from interference in state governments and Salinas's constant interventions could not be greater. Fox preferred to make grand gestures and fine statements, while paying little attention to policy detail. His high popularity rating continued into 2002, when disillusionment set in across the social spectrum. Lack of delivery became the central issue. Results rarely followed rhetoric. The rising crime rate in Mexico City was testimony to this. Major political failures dented the administration's image.

The objective of fiscal reform was to diminish dependence on oil revenues by increasing tax revenue from other sources. The administration wanted to extend Value Added Tax (IVA) to food and medicine at the rate of 15 per cent, but faced strong opposition in congress, particularly from PRI deputies, throughout 2001. Congress only allowed the package to go through in January 2002 after considerable dilution. The IVA extension was dropped, although the income tax rate was made uniform at 35 per cent and designed to settle at 32 per cent in 2005. This meant a considerable reduction of personal income tax (from 40 per cent) but was balanced by an increase in corporate and capital gains tax, a 10 per cent tax on cellular telephone calls, and a 20 per cent tax on luxury items.

Fox's aim in the congressional elections of July 2003 was to secure a clear majority. However, the PAN lost 20 per cent of its seats and was reduced to 153, while the PRI gained 10 per cent and finished with 224 seats. The PRD doubled its number of seats to 95, but its vote had dropped 30 per cent in the three years since the elections of 2000. Although the PAN won the governorship of San Luis Potosí, traditionally PRI but with a long tradition of opposition since the 1970s led by Dr Salvador Nava (1914–92),

and held Querétaro, which it had won in 1997, it lost its former stronghold of Nuevo León to the PRI.



Plate 9.3 Old Mexico City. These are the streets behind the National Palace, which constituted the eastern part of the colonial city centre. The Royal Mint, the principal Jesuit College, important convents and churches, and the Royal Academy of San Carlos were all located here. The architecture is a mixture of sturdy stone on unsteady foundations, baroque, and neo-classical styles. The area was neglected for decades and fell easily into decay until rescue began in the 1980s. In 2000, the businessman, Carlos Slim, and the Televisa journalist, Jacobo Zabludowsky, established the Foundation for the Rehabilitation of the Old Centre

(Photo by M. A. Anipkin)

During the second half of Fox's term, however, the PRI showed increasing signs of internal division. This threatened to compromise its attempt to regain the Presidency in 2006. Madrazo's rise in the party,

furthermore, provoked opposition. Party structures had been reformed in November and Madrazo was elected its new leader for a four-year term by a narrow majority in the following February.

Already obvious by mid-term, the Fox administration's lack of direction and poverty of achievement became glaring during its last two years in office. The context and extent of the reforms, which Fox wanted congress to approve, remained ill-defined.

The PAN heartlands in the mid-2000s continued to be in Guanajuato, Aguascalientes, and Jalisco, with strength also in Mérida and the towns of Baja California, although from the late 2000s, the Party's support in Chihuahua eroded. Baja California Norte, in 1989, had been the first State Governorship ever to be won by an opposition party. The party retained control there in 2006. The narrow presidential election victory in 2006, which put Felipe Calderón in office instead of the PRD candidate, López Obrador, the radical candidate considered for a long time to have been the favourite to win, left the latter claiming electoral fraud and insisting that he was the real victor. He attempted to set up an alternative government, although without public support. This attempt to destabilise Calderón's administration failed.

In these elections, the PAN secured 206 of the 500 seats in Congress. The mid-term elections of 5 July 2009, however, proved to be a crushing defeat for the incumbent PAN, falling to 143 seats, and giving the PRI a majority in the Lower House, increasing its seats from 108 to 237, and a strong position in the Senate. This was the first time since 1997 that any party had an overall majority in the Chamber of Deputies. At the same time, the PRI gained control of twenty-nine of the thirty-two State Governments, placing the Party in a commanding position for the presidential elections of

2012. The PAN lost control of the key states of Queretaro and San Luis Potosí. The Federal District, with an electorate of 8.5 million voters, remained in the hands of the PRD since the first mayoral elections in 1997, and its candidate, the capable Marcelo Ebrard, became Mayor for a six-year term. He set about cleaning up the city police force but his abortion law of December 2007 provoked opposition from the Catholic hierarchy and the Catholic Right. The Party retained control of Michoacán, Calderón's home state, in a three-way contest.

No obvious successor to Calderón emerged in the PAN in the run-up to the 2012 presidential election. The PRI put forward Enrique Peña Nieto, a consistent opponent of the Madrazo wing of the Party, who had won 47.6 per cent of the vote in elections for the Governorship of the State of Mexico in July 2005, but was not generally known at the national level. This was the largest electoral district in terms of seats in the Federal Congress. In July 2012, five State Governors and the Mayor of the Federal District were also to be elected. Peña Nieto won the presidential election with 38.2 per cent of the vote, defeating López Obrador, who took 31.6 per cent. The 63 per cent turnout was the highest to date. One of his first actions as President was the reform of the National Election Institute and the Electoral Court, in order to coordinate local and federal elections under one jurisdiction, in readiness for the mid-term elections of 7 June 2015.

These election results demonstrated that all three main parties had lost ground. Even though they still accounted for 60 per cent of the vote, the proportion had fallen from 90 per cent since 2005. The PRI and its allies took 260 seats, the PAN 108, and the PRD 56. This latter figure represented a disaster for the PRD, which lost 48 per cent of its seats. For the first time since 1991, the governing party retained a majority in the Lower Chamber.

López Obrador had left the PRD and formed his own MORENA, which won thirty-five seats but only 8.4 per cent of the vote. In the Federal District legislature, however, MORENA deputies outnumbered those of the PRD. The PRI won four of the nine State Governorships up for election – Sonora (with the first female Governor), San Luis Potosí, Guerrero, and Campeche.

A batch of twelve State Governorships and Legislatures, plus municipal offices, were up for election on 5 June 2016. The three key states contested were Veracruz, Puebla, and Oaxaca. Elections also took place for 388 state deputies and in 965 municipal councils. They would reveal the degree of support for the PRI federal government as well as for particular representatives in the states. The results were seen as a pointer to the presidential election of 2018. The most important of these elections took place in the State of Veracruz, where the controversial PRI Governor, Javier Duarte, had been accused of money-laundering, tax-evasion, and general financial maladministration. Veracruz, furthermore, was the third largest electoral district in the country, with 6 million voters. The state had the lowest growth rate after Campeche, and had seen the informal sector increase from 57 per cent of the labour force to 61 per cent between 2011 and 2016. More than half the working population lived in poverty, the proportion rising from 45.8 per cent to 54 per cent in those same years. More than 10,000 pensioners had not received their monthly payments. The PGR was already investigating forty officials of the Duarte administration.

In Veracruz, the PAN and PRD allied for the purpose of ousting the PRI, which they accomplished successfully with 34 per cent of the vote compared to the 30.5 per cent of the PRI. The new State Governor, M. A. Yunes Linares, declared that those officials responsible for linking the state

police with organised crime would be held responsible, that the two preceding PRI administrations would be audited, and those pilfering the public treasury would be severely punished. This election was the first time the PRI had lost power in the States of Veracruz, Tamaulipas, Chihuahua, and Durango, all won by the PAN. In all, the PAN increased its total of Governorships from 6 to 11, whereas the PRI dropped from 19 to 15. The PRD fell from 5 to 4. In Tamaulipas, the PAN actually won 50.1 per cent of the vote, against the PRI's 36 per cent, in what had traditionally been a PRI stronghold. PAN retained control of Puebla and Aguascalientes, but the PRI regained Oaxaca and Sinaloa. Peña Nieto described these results as an indication of the vibrancy of party competition in a democracy such as Mexico. The national leader of the PAN, Ricardo Anaya, maintained that, if this electoral trend continued, his party would be back in the Presidency in 2018. The Party had never before gained more than three governorships in any one election.

These elections proved to be particularly favourable to PAN and the MORENA. PAN gained a majority in several state legislatures – Aguascalientes, Chihuahua, Durango, Puebla, and Tamaulipas. In Oaxaca, the PRI secured a majority. MORENA once more gained a majority in the Constituent Assembly of Mexico City, with twenty-two seats, higher than the PRD at nineteen seats, the PAN at 7 and the PRI at 5, out of a total of sixty seats. These representatives would thereafter proceed to formulate the first Constitution for the newly created State of Mexico City. Seven out of every ten capital-city inhabitants, however, did not vote in this election.

With the PRI's recapture of power in 2012, Mexico appeared to be moving towards a two-party system with alternations in government, especially as the PRD split into two rival sections, each of them bidding for

Left support. In effect, party competition had, since the 1990s, become the political norm in a way it had not been before 1988. The PRI's electoral recovery after 2009 and the PAN's after 2015 suggested the possibility of victories in following presidential elections. This certainly happened in 2012, although there can be no guarantee that such a tendency will recur in 2018. The PRI managed to retain control of the crucial State of Mexico in June 2017, with a narrow victory over MORENA, which had hoped to seize the state as a springboard for a López Obrador victory in the presidential elections of 2018. The PRD, which came third, accused MORENA of dividing the Left. The PAN came fourth.

In both economic and political terms, much will depend on whether Peña Nieto's series of reforms can have the desired results. In the meantime, similar outstanding issues remain to be resolved – corruption, violence, and maladministration, as the election result in Veracruz demonstrated, along with the problem of entrenched opposition to reform, irrespective of the governing party which attempts to introduce it.

The presidential election of 2018 turned out to be a three-way contest between MORENA, the PRI, and the PAN. Early in 2018, the PRI, hoping to revive the party's long dominance in the years from 1946 to 2000, appeared, nevertheless, unable to find a suitable candidate. The same applied to the anti-PRI alliance, formed in June 2017, known as the *Frente Amplio Democrático* (FAD) formed by the PAN and PRD, seemingly unlikely allies. The choice of candidate could prove to be contentious, the cause of a possible split in the PRD, if he or she leaned too heavily to the Right or were in any way compromised. López Obrador (AMLO) was attempting to gain the presidency for the third time, after failures in 2006 and 2012. Sometimes described by political enemies as an authoritarian

populist in the tradition of Venezuela's Hugo Chávez, little of that was in evidence during his successful period as Mayor of Mexico City in 2000–5. Frontrunner elected in 2018, it is likely that his priority will be social policy, in view of the increasing inequalities between rich and poor in Mexico. Current policies in the United States – the issue of the Wall and the implications of the renegotiation of the NAFTA Treaty – may have swung the Mexican electorate to the Left in a general opposition to the rhetoric coming from the North.

Mexico in the World: International Relations from 2000



President Fox and his first Foreign Minister, Jorge Castañeda, who was more or less a freelancer in politics and a frequent commentator in the political journals, hoped to give Mexico a more prominent role in world affairs. Fox made a large number of foreign trips in his first years of office, partly in order to promote this aim, and partly to restore Mexico's image in the world as a democracy which respected human rights. By mid-term, however, it had become clear that the Mexican government had very little international impact. Fox received criticism inside the country for his lack of diplomatic skills. Calderón spent much of his time as President countering US misconceptions of Mexico and negative statements. Mexico suffered a diplomatic humiliation, when in 2005, the United States supported the successful Chilean candidate for the position of Secretary General of the Organization of American States.

Inevitably, relations with the USA continued to dominate Mexican foreign relations. Despite the initially good personal relations between Fox and the newly President George W. Bush (2000–4), both ranchers with a business background and impatient with entrenched bureaucracies, US foreign policy priorities soon left Mexico high and dry during 2001. This situation became all the more obvious in the aftermath of the New York and Washington terrorist attacks of 11 September. Worsening relations between the US administration and much of the European Union, deepening involvement in the Middle East, and mounting concern with China and the Far East reduced Latin America – and Mexico in particular – to matters of lesser consideration. This did not signify, however, that events in the subcontinent were in themselves of little consequence, even for the United States. It meant that the US administration chose not to look at them.

Mexico held one of the two Latin American seats on the United Nations Security Council for the two-year period of 2002–4. This coincided with the worsening of the international crisis over Iraq. The Mexican government, along with other Latin American states, opposed military intervention in Iraq by the United States and associates in March 2003, and adopted the same position as France, Russia and China, three permanent members of the Security Council.

Migration and the Northern Border Question

Conflict continued over Mexican immigration into the United States. US commentators drew attention to the fact that in 1990, the so-called 'Hispanic' element of the total population had amounted to only 9 per cent of the total. By 2000, this proportion rose to 12.5 per cent, largely as a result of the high birth rate at 4.3 per cent, in contrast to the rest of the population at 0.8 per cent. The city of Los Angeles was estimated in 2005 to be 46 per cent 'Hispanic' in composition. These 'Hispanics', estimated across the United States at some 44 million people, consisted not just of Mexicans, but also of migrants from a range of other Latin American and Caribbean countries. By 2012, this figure had risen to 52 million inhabitants, with non-Hispanic blacks at 38.3 million. It was estimated that by 2050, 'Hispanics' would constitute 25 per cent of the US population, which by that time would contain a minority of 'whites'. Such a projection spread fears of 'Hispanization', which might be described as alarm that the language of Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Galdós should take an equal place to the language of Shakespeare, Dickens, and Hemingway. As legal residents could participate in elections, their votes were canvassed by the rival political parties and could affect the outcome. Although 66 per cent of 'Latinos' voted for him to be President on 4 November 2008, Barack Obama had never been anywhere in Latin America before taking office. In 2010, twenty-four 'Hispanics' sat in the US House of Representatives,

although still only two in the Senate (both Cuban-Americans) and there were only two State Governors (Nevada and New Mexico).

Neither the visit to Mexico by Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State in the Bush administration, nor the Tripartite Meeting of the three North American Presidents at Bush's Crawford ranch, both in March 2005, had any significant result, least of all with regard to the status of Mexican migrants in the United States. These two meetings, furthermore, took place against the background of disparaging remarks about Mexico made by officials in the CIA and the US State Department and the US Ambassador's statement that Mexico presented an unstable security situation. Relations between the two countries continued in the doldrums. Senior US Government personnel seemed to have lost interest in Mexico altogether.

By January 2006, there were estimated to be some 11.3 million Mexicans living and working inside the United States. Of these, 6 million were illegal immigrants, many by overstaying their visa time. In 2007, a peak figures of 7 million 'illegals', many of them working in the construction industry, had been reached, in contrast to the 5.6 million legal immigrants. Between 1997 and 2001, the US authorities deported more than 2 million unauthorized migrants, most of them from Mexico.

After Bush's re-election in November 2004, the Republican Party for the first time in seventy years controlled both Houses of the US Congress. Conservative opposition continued to delay any agreement on the legalization of the status of undocumented migrants.

No solution satisfactory to both sides had been worked out concerning the status of illegal immigrants. Mexican critics of the Fox administration pointed to its failure to ensure that the human rights of migrant workers were respected in the United States. For Mexico, this was the principal

issue; for the US government, the issue was border security. Up to a certain point, these two perspectives remained irreconcilable. US Government security concerns and the political pressures from Parties and States conditioned thinking on the subject. Congress continually failed to work out any positive restatement concerning the position of undocumented migrants. Mexico, in particular, and Latin America (and the Caribbean) continued to be regarded in the United States as actually or potentially unstable, of secondary or tertiary importance, and as little more than a 'backyard'. Regardless of persistent resentment everywhere south of the border, such views still reflected US attitudes. In Mexico, which considered these attitudes to be offensive and provocative, dealing with the closest neighbour, as we have seen, has constantly presented difficulties.

The US recession of 2008–9 increased unemployment and exacerbated the difficulty of finding work. The overall number of Mexican migrants fell at that time, although this trend had already been evident in 2007. The US Department of Homeland Security suggested in 2008 that the number of illegal migrants had fallen and that the total number of Mexicans living and working in the United States had dropped from a peak of 11.8 million in January 2007 to 11.6 million in January 2008 and 11.5 million at the beginning of 2009. In 2011, this latter remained the same, of which 6.8 million were Mexicans. The number of migrants in the twelve-month period of March 2008 to March 2009 fell to 175,000 persons from a peak of 653,000 in 2005, according to US data, that is to its lowest point in a decade. The US Customs and Border Protection Agency stated that the number of illegal migrants caught in 2007 had been 858,638 and 662,000 in 2008, down from a peak of 1.1 million persons in 2004. It fell further to 473,000 in 2010 and 327,577 in 2011. The number of deportations,

however, still remained high, at 314,094 in 2013. Anti-migrant sentiment in the United States, and its appearance in the presidential election campaigns of 2008 and 2012, also helped to account for the increasing number taking the decision to return to Mexico. It appears to be the case that Mexican emigration to the United States fell about 50 per cent between 2000 and 2011. The explanation may lie in stricter border control, fluctuations in the US economy, the continued impact of recession after 2008, drug-gang violence across the border states, a falling birth rate in Mexico over two decades, and improvements in social security and primary education inside Mexico. Parallel to this phenomenon, remittances sent by Mexican residents to family back home also declined from 2006, after doubling between 2000 and 2004. From a total of US\$23.98 billion in 2007, they fell to US\$21.26 billion in 2009. Since the states of Michoacán, Guanajuato, and Jalisco were among the highest receivers, the impact of this fall was felt hardest there.

Calderón put relations with the United States on a secondary level, not visiting Washington until February 2008 and, even then, not meeting President George W. Bush. He had evidently given up hope of any agreement on immigration until the presidential succession in December. Calderón used a state visit to Washington in May 2010, during which he addressed both Houses of Congress, to criticise lax gun control and high drug consumption in the United States. He particularly objected to Arizona's laws criminalizing undocumented cross-border migration. In a newspaper interview on 22 February 2011, Calderón complained of lack of coordination between the DEA, FBI and CIA, asserting that no one seemed to be in charge or know what anyone else was doing. His opposition to the US Ambassador, who had criticized Mexican security agencies, led to the

latter's resignation on 19 March. The Mexican President totally rejected the notion that Mexico posed a security risk to the United States. On the other hand, Mexico did confirm that it had agreed to the use of unmanned drones, first used in February 2011, over its northern territories as part of the war against the narcotic gangs.

The Obama administration's commitment to the reform of migrant status remained unclear for a long time, largely because of congressional opposition. The House of Representatives in January 2011, for instance, voted against the automatic right of migrants' children born in the United States to US citizenship. The Senate rejected the view that children of undocumented migrants could become US citizens if they served in the Army or graduated with a university degree. State restrictions were most severe in Arizona, Georgia, and Oklahoma. On 20 November 2014, Obama's Executive Decree altered the Immigration Law. The decree provided an amnesty for undocumented migrants resident for more than five years in the United States or who had US-born or naturalised children. They were given a three-year period within which to regulate their status. This affected some 4 million migrants, of whom two-thirds were Mexicans. The decree was welcomed by the Mexican Government.

The issue of wall-building as a means of keeping out Mexican migrants had already been alive in the 1990s. It assumed greater proportions in the 2000s and became a presidential election issue in the USA in 2016. This wall might be literal or 'virtual'. Governor Rick Perry of Texas asserted on 19 November 2007, for example, that a 'virtual' wall of border cameras would be in place to monitor prospective crossings by January 2008.

NAFTA

In retrospect, it was recognised that Salinas's Mexico took a gamble that the country would benefit, rather than lose out, in tying its economy more closely to that of the United States. Previous governments from the Díaz era onward had attempted to diversify and disconnect, especially with the vast expansion of the US economy and that country's rise to Great Power status early in the twentieth century. Furthermore, Mexican governments, since the time of Limantour, especially during the revolutionary era from the 1910s to 1940s, and then again in the 1960s and 1970s, had brought significant sectors of the economy under state control or supervision. The revolutionary reaction to foreign investment and foreign property-holdings still remained strong into the 1970s. The shock of the debt crisis of 1981–2, however, had led to pressures for the liberalization of the economy, in order to stimulate trade and investment. These reached a climax during the Salinas administration of 1988–96, as we have seen. Salinas's decision to integrate the Mexican economy with those of the United States and Canada should be understood in relation to the application inside Mexico of the privatization policies prevalent elsewhere in the North Atlantic world in that period. NAFTA came out of that context. Despite the political change in 2000–12, the PAN continued the trend established under Salinas. The aim was to transform Mexico into a trade-dependent economy, departing from the import-substitution and mixed economy characteristic of the period from the 1930s to the 1980s.

Although the export of Mexican manufactures to the USA increased by 18 per cent between 1994 and 2000, the proportion drastically fell to only 6 per cent in 2000–7. Objections in the US labor movement and the Democratic Party pointed to the lower cost of labor in Mexico, where cheaper labor inhibited investment in high technology. The reduction of tariffs on the import of US maize, beans, powdered milk, and sugar cane, ending on 1 January 2008, adversely affected Mexican agriculture. Government investment in rural areas to limit the damage was not forthcoming, despite pressure from the CNC, because welfare commitments had priority. Accordingly, peasants abandoned the land for the already swollen cities or attempted to migrate to the United State in search of a better life. US farmers considerably benefitted from the opening of the Mexican market because they had greater access to investment and a more advanced infrastructure than in Mexico.

The tenth anniversary of the signature of the NAFTA Treaty on 9 December 2002 took place against the background of tension over border issues. The three founding leaders, George Bush Senior, Brian Mulroney of Canada, and Carlos Salinas of Mexico arrived in Washington, along with current incumbents, for the celebration. The appearance of the disgraced Salinas, in self-imposed exile since his departure from office in 1994, raised eyebrows in Mexico. At the meeting, Fox once more expressed his desire to see NAFTA evolve into a customs union. Over-optimistic, he proposed 2005 as the transformation date. This was very unlikely to occur. Nevertheless, Fox drew attention to the extent of Mexico's trade with the United States, and to the fact that Mexico had now become the world's ninth-largest economy. Nevertheless, the benefits drawn from NAFTA had been uneven. Car-component plants had moved forward, whereas ranching

had suffered after the loss of tariff protection at the beginning of 2003. Furthermore, Mexican peasant producers were likely to suffer in the near future. The 1992 treaty had exempted Mexican maize from the NAFTA provisions, a position which, Fox explained, could not last – and with it continued state funding of low-yield food producers.

Fox favoured the free movement of labor within ten years, a position which continued to find little support in the United States. Issues such as reciprocal prohibitions of imports – Mexican tuna, mangoes and sugar, or US meats and apricots – ruffled relations without radically disturbing them. Mexican suspicion of US protectionist intent remained strong. However, outstanding matters such as control and distribution of the waters of the Río Bravo (Grande), established under the 1994 treaty, were resolved.

The Minister of the Economy pointed out in 2015 that Mexican trade with NAFTA had increased four fold since 1994, and that the three participating economies were becoming interlinked in terms of standards, speed of movement of goods and persons, and improvement of competitiveness in global markets. In his view, Mexican adhesion to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in 2016 would further diversify exports and stimulate new investment. He stressed, however, that he saw the TPP within the context of NAFTA, without specifying what that actually implied. Membership of NAFTA, furthermore, had implications for the energy sector. On 15 December 2014, for instance, representatives of the three countries discussed trilateral energy strategy, as distinct from the policies adopted by OPEC. For Mexico, increasing US movement towards self-sufficiency in energy production meant a diminishing share of its market and, consequently, the need to develop markets in Europe and Asia, especially China.

A certain amount of discussion has already emerged, notably in the United States, concerning the nature and, in fact, the future, of NAFTA as its twenty-fifth anniversary approached in 2018. The subject of a potential US withdrawal from NAFTA, should there be disputes with Canada or Mexico, had already emerged during the US presidential campaign of 2008, when both Democratic Party potential candidates, Barack Obama and Hilary Clinton, had been obliged to address the issue. The State of Ohio, for instance, crucial in any presidential election, appears to have been badly hit by the transfer of production to Mexico. The candidates raised the possibility of reforming NAFTA, a matter which reappeared in the presidential campaign of 2016. In contrast to the constitutional difficulties established for member states wishing to leave the European Union, departure from NAFTA could simply be given effect by six months' notice to the other partners. This is largely because NAFTA has never had any supra-national political objectives or any aspiration to monetary union. It has, however, left two unresolved issues: the position of labour in the United States and the condition of agriculture in Mexico. Furthermore, the development of other comparable commercial associations, such as the Pacific Alliance and the frequency of bilateral trade agreements among Latin American countries and between them and other states, including the United States, has raised the question of NAFTA's relationship to them.

After the US presidential election of November 2016 and the accession of Republican President Donald Trump, who made it an issue in the campaign, in January 2017, the future of NAFTA hung in the balance. The question of renegotiation of the treaty accompanies the issue of the building of the grand wall blocking off Mexico from US territory. Both were promises made by Trump during the election campaign. Understandably,

Mexican–US relations have fallen to a new low point. The wall issue provoked the cancellation of Peña Nieto's visit to Washington, following Trump's inauguration. Even so, Peña Nieto has been criticised in Mexico for an allegedly passive response to Trump's provocative language. They did not actually meet until the Hamburg G-20 Summit on 7–8 July 2017.

The United States set 16 August 2017 as the date for the beginning of trilateral talks on the renegotiation of the NAFTA Treaty. Washington's threat to walk away from NAFTA, if the terms should be regarded as unfavourable to US interests, remained constant. This would leave commercial relations henceforth governed by World Trade Organization regulations, involving the imposition of tariffs between the three countries. Neither Canada nor Mexico would welcome such a state of affairs. Mexico's aim is to keep unrestricted access to the US market and avoid a new protectionism. While the United States wanted to increase access to the Mexican and Canadian markets, its overriding aim was to reverse the adverse balance of trade with Mexico, which Trump had made a political issue. In 1994, the United States had a trade surplus of US\$1.3 billion, but by 2016, Mexico enjoyed a surplus of US\$64 billion, and, accordingly Trump has blamed Mexico for causing unemployment in the US manufacturing sector, a view which is open to dispute. On the other hand, the United States depends on Mexican agricultural imports to supply its own market needs. Mexican food producers fear the imposition of tariffs against them. The United States, pursuing a private enterprise agenda, criticized state subsidies and price-fixing by state-owned corporations. For his part, Peña Nieto, on 24 July 2017, linked renegotiation of NAFTA with his own administration's investment agenda in the energy sector reforms of 2013–14. In the first round of talks on 16–20 August, Mexico and Canada,

their objectives clearly linked, stood for a re-balancing and updating of the Treaty and in opposition to neo-protectionism. Canada, for instance, argued that the deficit–surplus issue was a misleading base for such talks, and that labor standards and the environment should be major concerns. Walking out of the NAFTA would damage the United States, as much as Mexico and Canada. One explanation of that is the fact that the three hydro-producing countries are energy interdependent, exporting crude and refined oil outside their bloc. This situation suggests the logic of coordinating energy policy. For that reason, Mexico stood for deeper integration of NAFTA, not its breaking up. The second round took place on 1–5 September 2017, with little positive result. Mexico, in the meantime, proposed to expand its existing trade relations with the European Union, Brazil, Argentina and members of the Pacific Alliance, should free access to the US market be lost. President Peña Nieto showed his view of the renegotiation talks by departing on an official visit, on 4–6 September, where trade relations were inevitably discussed, notably concerning energy and infrastructure cooperation, along similar lines to Chinese policies in South America. China has been promoting the idea of a Free Trade Area of Asia Pacific, in which Mexico might conceivably have an interest. Peña Nieto's visit fortuitously coincided with the Ninth Summit of BRICS, in which China was the host. The new USMCA agreement, signed on 1 October 2018, superseded NAFTA. It made no mention of free trade and took its name from the initials of the three countries involved. US protectionist tariffs on steel and aluminium were maintained. The agreement benefited large US farming combines, disadvantaging Mexican smallholders, and favored large US pharmaceutical companies. It sought also to discourage automobile firms from deploying production to Mexican sources.

Beyond the USA

Mexico joined the OECD in 1995. Ten years later, the country still remained its poorest member and would continue to lag behind, unless it improved its growth rate to above 4 per cent p.a. When Chile became the only other Latin American country to join the OECD, in 2010, that country was rated a better credit risk than Mexico. The OECD criticised the Mexican government for not using the high oil prices of that period for the purpose of encouraging higher productivity and developing education, and stressed the need for reform of the labor laws, which would diminish the informal sector and increase the radius of tax payment. It pointed to low educational achievements, with Mexico at a level comparable to Turkey, and below Eastern Europe, China, and India.

Negotiations begun during the Zedillo presidency resulted in 2000 in the Free Trade Agreement between Mexico and the European Union, which would have positive repercussions on both sides. This represented yet again a continuation of the traditional Mexican policy of diversifying its channels of commerce, begun in the Díaz era, away from the United States, its predominant partner. Many other such Free Trade Agreements were negotiated at this point. On the other hand, Mexico's relations with Latin America deteriorated during the Fox administration. Relations with Cuba had been strained since 1994 and worse than ever from 2004, and there were no diplomatic relations with Venezuela's Hugo Chávez from 2005. Calderón sought to recover Mexico's prestige and influence but escalating drug wars inside the country seriously vitiated this endeavor. His intention

was to improve relations within Latin America, starting with the restoration of relations with Cuba in August 2007, and then developing contacts with Brazil and Argentina.

Mexico hosted two international conferences in 2002. The first of these was the United Nations Conference on the Financing of Development, held in Monterrey in March. Bush, Fidel Castro, Jacques Chirac and some fifty heads of state or government attended what turned out to be a rather inconsequential meeting. At the end of October, Mexico hosted the *Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation* summit in Los Cabos (Baja California Sur). The APEC had been established in 1989 in Canberra by a range of Pacific Rim states, in order to promote free trade, increase investment among members in two stages by 2010 and 2020, and harmonise financial and banking systems. Its secretariat resided in Singapore. China joined in 1991, Mexico in 1993, Chile in 1994, and Peru in 1998. By 2014, there were a total of 21 members, including Russia and Vietnam, and annual meetings. APEC's objectives extended to technical cooperation and the improvement of educational standards. The Mexican government viewed the newly industrializing countries within APEC as potential associates where relations with the developed economies were concerned, especially with regard to the latter's observation of World Trade Organization agreements on tariffs. At the 2002 meeting, the final communiqué warned against agricultural export subsidies by developed countries, such as Japan, the European Union, and the United States.

Mexico hosted the fifth ministerial summit of the WTO at Cancún in mid-September 2003, but the meeting disintegrated after a conflict between Brazil and the United States over the questions of tariffs and subsidies. Cancún, however, saw the emergence of the 'Grupo 23', with Brazil, China,

India, and South Africa in the forefront, despite US efforts to disperse it. Mexico also joined this group of developing countries, along with Pakistan, Turkey, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Nigeria, and a range of other Latin American countries. The thrust continued to be directed against industrialized states, which argued for Free Trade but refused to liberalize their own agricultural sectors.

At the 21-member APEC summit in Santiago (Chile) in November 2004, Fox again raised with Bush the issues of cross-border migration and the status of undocumented Mexican residents in the USA. The latter assured Fox that the US government regarded this issue as a priority, but, in contrast to the Mexican government, saw it in terms of security and the 'War on Terror', proclaimed by Bush after the September 2001 attacks in New York and Washington. Bush used the summit to expound further his doctrine on the 'War on Terror', a subject in which few Latin Americans had much interest.

The key figure in this summit turned out not to be Bush but the Chinese President, Hu Jintao, who upstaged his US counterpart by proposing large Chinese investment in Latin American businesses and infrastructure and by pointing to a closer commercial relationship between the two geographical areas. Hu Jintao, moreover, attended the summit in the aftermath of a visit to Brazil and Argentina, where present agreements had been finalized and future ones discussed. China, with 1,300 million inhabitants, at that time had the fastest growing economy in the world at the rate of 9 per cent p.a., fuelled by high levels of production technology and a low-wage labour market. Latin America had already become in 2003 the second-largest destination of Chinese foreign investment (at 36.5 per cent) after Asia (at 52.6 per cent). Chile, Brazil, and Argentina, in particular,

welcomed Chinese overtures, which would stimulate exports of soya, meat, wool, gas, steel, cement, rubber, and a range of minerals, beginning with Chilean copper.

Mexico, however, in contrast to Argentina, Chile, and Brazil, tended to view the increasing Chinese presence in the Americas as a threat both to its domestic textile and shoe-making industries and its position in the US market. This pointed to the need for greater productivity in Mexico and an increased understanding of the Chinese market by Mexican businessmen. Rival demand for Mexican oil in the United States threatened to dent any potential petroleum export to China. Even so, Mexican exports to China increased from US\$500 million in 2001 to US\$5 billion in 2011, a significant indication of the changing pattern of Mexico's external trade, although still only 1 per cent of the total exports went to China – oil, iron, copper, and minerals. In that latter year, China had become the second largest importer of goods into Mexico, accounting for 15 per cent of the total. The first Mexican–Chinese Trade and Investment Forum in April 2012 examined ways of stimulating the Mexican export trade, for instance by the shipment of pork to China. Peña Nieto visited China, Hong Kong, and Japan early in April 2013. He discussed with Xi Jinping the low level of trade between the two countries, although the balance seemed to be shifting, due to the rising cost of manufacturing in China. They reviewed the petroleum agreement of the previous January, when PEMEX undertook to begin delivering crude oil to China from April. Xi Jinping's visit to Mexico in June may well have focused on the possibilities for Chinese participation in the proposed sale of sections of PEMEX's monopoly to private and foreign concerns.

Mexico became the first Latin American country to host a meeting of the G-20, when the Seventh Meeting of the Group was held in Los Cabos (Baja California) on 18–19 June 2012. In order to increase the Latin American presence, the Mexican government invited Colombia and Chile to participate alongside Argentina and Brazil, which were already members. These latter two governments opposed the type of austerity policies championed by Germany and called for measures to facilitate growth and job creation through government intervention. The immediate background to the Summit, however, was the worsening of the economic crisis in the European Union, notably the attempt to work out the implications of a monetary union for economies with differing conditions. The IMF wanted to reverse the stagnation on the European continent, but the USA, still struggling uncertainly out of deep recession, found it difficult to provide increased funding. The BRICS members expressed reluctance and also stated their opposition to that type of austerity. Regardless of these differing perspectives, the principle of open economies continued to be asserted. Mexico's role in steering the Summit through such conflicting waters was praised by Christine Lagrange, Director of the IMF.

Mexico's international role had increased remarkably by the 2010s. The Pacific dimension assumed prominence in policy calculations. The Calderón administration took the decision to join the TPP, with the object of diversifying Mexican exports, along with Canada. This project had been initiated in July 2005 by New Zealand, Chile, and Singapore, and joined in 2008 by Australia, Vietnam, and Peru. Japan and the United States, despite significant opposition in Congress among the Democrats, adhered in 2013, followed by Malaysia and Brunei. These twelve members met at regular intervals. When the three leaders of Canada and the United States met on 19

February 2014, the question of the future relationship between the TPP and NAFTA arose. This issue affected the future shape and purpose of the 'Pacific Rim' associations, especially with regard to their relationship with China. After five years of negotiation, the TPP Treaty was finally concluded in Atlanta on 6 October 2015 (although not ratified by the US Senate), binding together a market consisting of 800 million people and accounting for 40 per cent of the world's GDP. As much as 72 per cent of Mexico's trade was with TPP members and 51 per cent of its Foreign Direct Investment originated from the zone. The glaring problem, however, remained: China was not a participant. Did this mean that the TPP was directed against China? Was this Treaty designed to be a United States' front for opposition to the reawakened giant of the East? Had not Obama already proclaimed in 2011 that henceforth the Pacific area, rather than Europe or the Middle East, was to be the United States' priority area in foreign policy and strategic thinking? With the change of administration in the United States in January 2017, President Trump withdrew from the Treaty, maintaining that it promoted no one's interests. The remaining signatories reaffirmed the TPP and signed an updated Agreement in March 2018.

The tentative outlines for a Pacific Alliance were broached at the Twentieth Ibero-American Summit held in Mar del Plata (Argentina) in December 2010, based on an idea by the President of Peru, Alan García, but nothing much resulted until the meetings in Lima in April 2011 and Mérida (Yucatán) in December. The Alliance was formally constituted in Antofagasta (Chile) in June 2012. The objective would be the free circulation of products, services, capital, and population among the component Pacific countries – Chile, Peru, Colombia, and Mexico – and the

integration of their stock markets, infrastructure, and energy sectors. This made sense, because Colombia by 2016 was Mexico's principal trading partner in Latin America and the Caribbean, and third-largest global partner after the United States and China. The Pacific Alliance was to be a trade bloc, which would aim to become a single economy. Unlike the European Union, it would have no ulterior political purposes or common monetary system. With a total population of 210 million people, the countries of the Alliance outnumbered Brazil and had a capital market at least equal to it. In contrast to the countries of MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Bolivia from 2015), which had stalled, their economies were open and not protectionist. The overriding aim was to break into the Asiatic market. This, however, would prove to be the most difficult of their objectives. Peña Nieto attended the Seventh Pacific Alliance Heads of State Summit in Cali (Colombia) on 23 May 2013. The plan was to remove 90 per cent of tariffs between the four member states from 30 June of the same year, thereby making it Latin America's largest Free Trade area.

Focus on the Pacific dimension, however, required serious attention to Mexico's Pacific ports, if they were to become thriving commercial hubs. Trade turnover in Manzanillo and Lázaro Cárdenas had already increased from 22 to 28 million tonnes between 2000 and 2014, but new terminals were required at both to enable them to handle a projected capacity of 50 million tonnes. That in itself, however, would prove useless, if the road and rail infrastructure leading to the ports remained inadequate. We have already seen furthermore, the extent of drug-cartel penetration of the entire territory between the highlands and Pacific coast of Michoacán and their manipulation of the port traffic of Lázaro Cárdenas. Problems of that degree indicated the urgency of resolving the question of cartel activity.

Peña Nieto, as President-elect, had embarked on an exploratory visit to other Latin American states in September 2012, thereby continuing Calderón's policy of prioritising this region. He began the trip in Guatemala, where another border issue, this time in the south, had become an issue concerning drugs and crime as well as migration across Mexico to the United States. Mexico's aim, nevertheless, was closer economic integration with Central America. In Colombia, by that time one of Latin America's most vibrant economies, the objective was to draw on Colombian expertise. In Peru, talks focused on the Pacific Alliance Free Trade Agreement, which came into effect in February of that year. By contrast, his aim in Brazil was to persuade the country to adopt a more open economic policy and move towards closer integration with Mexico, while at the same time discussing the issue of private investment in their respective oil industries. Mexico argued in 2014 for the inclusion of the Central American countries, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Panama in the Pacific Alliance.

Throughout 2013, Peña Nieto aimed to give Mexico a greater profile in the Caribbean, with the objective of superseding Venezuela, where the economy had plunged into deep recession and society faced deepening political turmoil, and to challenge Brazil's growing interest in the region. He had signed an agreement with Raúl Castro for economic cooperation between the two countries during the Santiago (Chile) conference of Latin American Heads of State in November 2013. The Mexican President attended the Conference of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in Havana late in January 2014, indicating his intention to continue good relations with Cuba, especially as the country had begun to open up to greater foreign trade.

Within the European Union, Mexico continued to develop close relations with Spain, France, Germany, and Italy in commercial and cultural terms. British governments, however, continued to lag behind, despite academic and cultural interest in Mexico and growing tourism. The Free Trade Agreement of 2000 did provide some stimulus, however. The situation began to improve after 2010, when Foreign Secretary William Hague's Address at Canning House in London affirmed the British need to pay greater attention to Latin America. A British Trade Mission to Mexico followed in February 2014, which resulted in the opening of a British Business Centre in Mexico City in the following May. As part of this initiative, the British-based HSBC Bank and *Nacional Financiera*, the Mexican Development Bank, agreed to fund jointly a project for the stimulation of small, and medium enterprises in both countries and encourage their mutual trading. A 'Dual Year' was proclaimed for both countries in 2015, in order to facilitate increased contact and stimulate the commercialisation of each country's products. Mutual areas of interest included telecommunications, aerospace, the automobile industry, architecture, and the creative arts. Early in March 2015, Peña Nieto, following in the footsteps of Presidents Echeverría (1973), De la Madrid (1985), and Calderón (2009), paid a state visit to Great Britain, during which, like Calderón, he addressed both Houses of Parliament.

Symbolising Mexico's growing international perspective, a new Mega-Airport had been planned on the lake bed of Lake Texcoco, located to the north-east of the existing Benito Juárez International Airport. This has been currently running to capacity. The new airport, however, will require fresh infrastructure to connect it speedily to the hub areas of Mexico City. The idea was first developed during the Fox Presidency but definitively adopted

under Peña Nieto in September 2014. The contract for design and construction has been awarded jointly to the firms of Fernando Romero and the British architect, Norman Foster and Partners. The Romero Enterprises had had many distinguished achievement to its credit and represents the foremost architectural business in Mexico. The Soumaya Museum, built between 2005 and 2010 in striking design, opened in 2011. The firm also designed the G-20 Summit Centre in Los Cabos for the 2012 meeting discussed earlier in this chapter. The latter firm already designed Stansted Airport (London's third) in 1991 and the new Hong Kong Airport in 1998. The intention would be to complete the first stage of building by 2020.

Final Comments

First, I should like to reaffirm for this third edition the periodization of the post-Columbian era, as we may call it, which I adopted in the first and second editions: the European incursion, 1519–1620; New Spain, 1620–1770: Spanish colonialism and American society; destabilization and fragmentation, 1770–1867; reconstruction, 1867–1940; the monopoly party, 1940–2000. I think this has stood the test of time, although all attempts at such categorization are open to criticism. No attempt at categorization is being made for the post-2000 era, because we are too close to the events to ascertain any process, pattern, or underlying themes. Although the Revolutionary Institutional Party was back in power between 2012 and 2018, we are further away from the Revolution and, furthermore, the institutions and procedures deriving from it have been under strain or have been departed from since the beginning of the 1990s.

Looking back over the two previous centuries, we can see that two developments in the nineteenth century explained much of twentieth-century Mexico's characteristics. In the first place, the period 1836–67 altered the balance of power on the North American subcontinent in favour of the United States and against Mexico. The shock of military defeat, invasion, and territorial loss in the war of 1846–8 ensured that relations with the United States would be the predominant issue in foreign relations thereafter. However, this preoccupation with the powerful, imperial neighbour has tended to obscure the supremely important Mexican success in repelling the French Intervention of 1862–7 and preventing the imposition of a European neo-colonial tutelage. The republican victory of

1867 enabled the continuation of the Liberal Reform program, the essence of which was the solidification of a constitutional system and the secularization of society.

The second defining period is 1884–1911, when Díaz consolidated his personal rule. Controversy over how to interpret this period still continues. The constitutional experiment of 1855–76 – with all its imperfections – was, in effect, abandoned after 1884. A regime, which originated in a military rebellion in 1876, proceeded to weaken rather than reform or strengthen the institutions established in accordance with the Federal Constitution of 1857. Personal arrangements, which Juárez had deplored, once again became the political norm. The practice of self-succession in the presidential office, maintained by trickery and manipulation, and when many other capable candidates existed, explained the seriousness of the succession question after 1900. As Madero reluctantly foresaw, only violence could rid the country of the Díaz regime. When that violence came during the 1910s, the personal nature of the régime was exposed. No effective institutions could either address the widespread grievances or contain the revolutionary upheaval. The collapse of the Federal Army in 1914 opened the way for a struggle for power and wealth between rival chieftains and their armed following. Nevertheless, these chieftains had to take into consideration the social and economic demands resulting from large-scale popular mobilization. Economic and social changes from the latter part of the nineteenth century had altered the nature of political pressures on government and the elites. The different social and regional movements of the Mexican Revolution aligned behind one chieftain or another, in such a way that the naked power struggle also acquired an

ideological and social-reformist hue. A new, post-revolutionary order arose out of these rivalries between 1917 and 1940.

The first revolutionary presidents – Carranza, Obregón, and Calles – owed more to Díaz's style of government than they did to the principles of Juárez or Madero. Despite the far-ranging debates at the Querétaro Convention, which shaped the Constitution of 1917, exercise of power at national or state levels often owed less to revolutionary ideologies and popular aspirations than to the political culture before 1911. An often ignored characteristic of the post-1917 system was the reconstruction of presidential power. The creation of a national party of government in 1929 ultimately resolved the succession question by preventing the re-election of the President and other elected office-holders, and by facilitating the perennial re-election of the party. None of this followed automatically. Like the Reform before it, the Revolution was uniform in neither its policies nor their application. Much depended on local conditions and the capacity for reception within the states, districts, and municipalities. The structure of power, as well as ethnicity and culture, varied widely in many of these. National policy depended in reality on the response of local chieftains, authorities, and organised groups. Ultimately, presidential power and party monopoly gradually reduced the autonomy of the states of the federation but even then not without compromises and arrangements at state and local levels.

It could be convincingly argued that the period from 1940 until 1964 formed an essential unity. Those years fell between the end of the Cárdenas era and before the downturn in the PRI's reputation and fortunes during the administration of Díaz Ordaz (1964–70). This was a period of political stabilization, economic growth, and increasing social and educational

provision. This was still conceived within the terms of reference of the Mexican Revolution and under the Constitution of 1917. All four administrations, despite the different policy emphases and the distinct personalities of the presidents, upheld the general principles of economic nationalism and corporately based political inclusion, while at the same time asserting party hegemony and constructing what can be described as a 'presidential state'. This system took shape under Alemán and Ruiz Cortines, between 1946 and 1958. The former laid the basis for the University City and the National University (UNAM), with its modernist architecture and political murals; the latter president presided over the largely successful 'stabilized development'. The presidency of López Mateos (1958–64), who had been Secretary for Labor under Ruiz Cortines, in many respects, epitomised the strengths and limitation of this broader phase. Although a talented conciliator and popular figure, López Mateos still faced intractable social problems, partly inherited from previous administrations. Railroad-workers and doctor strikes combined with agrarian unrest in the State of Morelos, in which the leading figure was Rubén Jaramillo. The latter's assassination in 1962 threatened the régime's credibility as a conciliatory agency in the country. Despite certain repressive tendencies, the administration accomplished a great deal in spreading education through a broad range of society and in reviving the Cárdenas-era policy of land redistribution. Even so, the social disparities between the wealthy and the poor grew wider. The perennial problem of how to translate economic growth into broadly based development still had not been resolved.

After 1959, furthermore, the Mexican Revolution, officially 'institutionalized' through the PRI, faced the challenge presented by Fidel

Castro's Cuban Revolution, which had a deep impact throughout Latin America and affected political alignments inside Mexico. In the wider context of the Cold War, the United States was obliged to pay closer attention to political affairs in Latin America. While Mexican Governments refused to break diplomatic relation with Cuba, they continued, at the same time, to seek accommodation, as best they could, with the United States.

While it is tempting to argue that after 1982, under the impact of the debt crisis, technocrats replaced revolutionary ideologists at the helm of Mexico politics, we should recall the extent to which the Alemán administration of 1946–52 modified the earlier Cárdenas-era policies and opened the door to private enterprise. It would be correct, however, that after 1982, economic nationalism ran into crisis. The new model of development, running concurrently with policy changes in the United States and Western Europe, questioned the mixed economy with its strong emphasis on state enterprises and state intervention in the economy, favouring cuts in public expenditure and further opening to the private sector. This reached a climax in the Salinas administration of 1988–94. As a result of such policies, the social basis of the PRI further eroded, and during the later 1980s and through the 1990s, the monopoly party faced growing electoral challenges on the Right and the Left.

A considerable degree of grass-roots mobilization, for instance in San Luis Potosí and Guanajuato, modified PRI dominance in the states and municipalities during the two decades before 2000, once it became clear that opposition parties would be allowed to win elections. Local and centrifugal forces began to flourish outside the context of the monopoly party and the official political system. In some states, such as Oaxaca, indigenous community demands for an alternative political process led to

recognition of what were called electoral ‘practices and customs’ functioning beyond the constitutional system established in 1917. Growing resistance to centralism and the prospect of continued monopoly-party rule contributed to the PAN victory in the presidential election of 2000. This election confirmed the opening of the political system begun under Zedillo. An opposition candidate took office in an orderly transfer of power, as it would do once again in 2012.

The three interrelated issues of the latter part of the twentieth century – the state of the economy, the distribution of wealth, and the mechanics of the political system – continued to prevail, although alongside others, in the first two decades of the twenty-first century. This victory over the PRI in 2000 aroused widespread popular expectations, which proved difficult to fulfil. Social and political mobilization in response to a broad range of issues, from standards of living in the cities to indigenous autonomy in the provinces, pointed to the kind of problems which the second PAN administration, taking office after the presidential elections of 2006, would have to face. Frustration at the slow pace of reform and the scale of violence in the country helped to explain the PAN's loss of power in 2012 and the recovery of the PRI. The combination of delayed or frustrated reform with opposition to it by powerful sectors of society conversely explained PRI losses in the mid-term elections of 2016. This encouraged media speculation that either the PAN might recover power in 2018 or that the radical Left might find its moment.

The current competition for power between two principal political parties and two lesser ones had brought with it a real option for changes in who governs and for what purpose. It has thereby increased the level of accountability. Alternations in power at every elected level has

demonstrated the degree to which changes in society outpaced the former structure of the monopoly party of 1929–2000, and pointed to different methods of conducting politics in the country.

Restoration of relations with the Holy See in 1993, ruptured since 1867, has given the Catholic hierarchy a much stronger profile in the country and reopened the issues of relations between Church and State and between Church and society. Five papal visits during the pontificate of John Paul II were intended to reinvigorate the Mexican Church and bind it more closely to Rome. The canonization of a range of Mexican saints from the sixteenth to the twentieth century was designed to bring Mexican spirituality deeper into the mainstream of Catholicism. The Church in Mexico saw itself as a misunderstood institution, persecuted during the Liberal Reform and victimized during the Revolution. By the end of the twentieth century, it saw its mission as the re-Catholicising of Mexican society and culture in opposition to secularism and liberal social mores. In those respects, the Catholic Church shared a common view with Protestant evangelical groups, which had been moving into the empty spaces of religious recruitment during previous decades, both in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America. The apparent conflict between a clerical view of Mexican society and how ordinary people conduct their daily lives may well reveal a subtle blending of what on the surface might seem to be contradictory attitudes. Flexibility and pragmatism may be the way in which both religious belief and acceptance of secular values coexist in Mexico within individual lives. There seems to be little indication that an increased clerical profile coincides with renewal of religious fervour in the country.

Secularization of society from the Reform era onwards has always raised the question of the flourishing of religious belief alongside it in its many forms. To anyone who travels across Mexico, the number of shrines, devotions, and pilgrimages reveals the depth of these undercurrents of belief. Beyond the Basilica of Guadalupe, a proliferation of other shrines have been dedicated to differing aspects of Christ or the Virgin, or to particular saints, whether sanctioned or not by the official Church. The walls in well-known places of pilgrimage, such as San Juan de los Lagos in Jalisco or the church of the Holy Child of Atocha in Zacatecas, are covered with *ex-votos* – drawings, paintings or photographs giving thanks for some life-saving miracle. They testify to the intense character of popular belief. Similarly, regular pilgrimages by large numbers of people to such remote places as the church of St. Francis in Catorce (San Luis Potosí) or to the former Mission of St. Francis Xavier in Baja California Sur show a remarkable capacity for voluntary mobilization.

A striking feature of later twentieth-century Mexico has been the rapid growth of cities, not only the capital city megalopolis, but also state capitals such as Puebla, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, and Guadalajara. The first two cities had been centres of industrial activity in the colonial era as textile-producing areas. Most such cities revived and expanded in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century, recovering again in the post-Revolutionary era after the 1940s. Querétaro today is a vastly expanded industrial centre, still preserving intact its colonial core rich with Baroque architecture.

The overriding problems of early twenty-first century Mexico have their roots in the past, to say the least. Despite the opening of long-distance highways, there continue to be inadequacies of infrastructure, particularly

across country. Deficiencies in the educational system persist and the reform package of 2013–14 has been a governmental attempt to deal with this, although subject to effective implementation. The large extent of the informal sector continues to exempt those who work in it from the social services available in the formal sector of the economy. Widespread and persistent poverty still persist, and there has been evidence of its increase. Dependence on the energy sector had lead on several occasions to budget cuts affecting education, social services, and infrastructure projects. The need to broaden the span of investment in crucial areas of the economy has become an outstanding issue. All of these questions have easily been obscured by two overriding problems, both of them difficult to resolve: corruption and drug-traffic violence.

On the other hand, Mexico has a vibrant and diversified culture with many achievements in the humanities and sciences to its credit, with a strong capability in higher education, and has been able to hold its own against the United States and the European powers throughout recent history. During the past decades, it had survived the debt crisis of the 1980s, the financial crisis of 1995, and the recession of 2008, not to mention the serious earthquakes of 1985, 2017, and several lesser ones, along with typhoons, tornados, and hurricanes across the Pacific and Caribbean coasts. Mexican governments consistently resisted the isolation of Cuba by the United States from the 1960s and opposed that country's policies with regard to the South-American dictatorships of the 1970s and conflicts in Central America in the 1980s. From the Díaz era, the country has sought to diversify its sources of outside investment and bolster its domestic economy. The Revolution continued these endeavours, broadening the base of political support and strengthening state institutions. Without actually

being a social democracy, Mexico in the years from the 1930s to the 1980s exhibited several of the attributes of the mixed economy and welfare system which characterised that form of government. This differentiated it remarkably from the United States. From the 1980s onwards, the country has looked more closely to other Latin-American countries as well, for instance in the *Contadora Group* of the 1980s, and, along with them, beyond Latin America, as in the case of the APEC in 1993, and the Pacific Alliance of 2016. Bilateral trade agreements with a range of countries in and beyond Latin America, including the European Union, have complemented the NAFTA Treaty of 1993.

The 2000s was the decade during which the United States lost its former hegemony in Latin America. Preoccupation with other geographical areas, such as the Middle East, only partly explains this. The principal explanation lies in the growing self-assertion of the leading Latin-American countries, of which Mexico is one. By the 2010s, this loss of hegemony has become irreversible. The United States still, however, retains a major position in the affairs of the American continent, which should not be underrated, as the existence of NAFTA has so far indicated. Mexico's international relations, furthermore, are likely to continue to be primarily focused on the United States. This particular relationship continues to be uneven and subject to repeated misconceptions on the part of the northern neighbour. The trans-border question, for example, remains unresolved. At times, rhetoric and gesture give the impression that the United States views its southern neighbour as something akin to a hostile entity, to be guarded against by fences, walls, surveillance cameras, and armed patrols.

The principle behind the Peña Nieto reform package, directed to the energy sector (oil, gas, and electricity), telecommunications, and education

indicated the extent to which a post-2012 generation of PRI leaders continued in the tradition of De la Madrid and Salinas – and also of Fox and Calderón – by departing from the old-style revolutionary nationalism which Echeverría and López Portillo failed to revive between 1970 and 1982. In effect, the demands of the economy for fresh sources of investment and higher productivity, combined with the social necessity of raising standards of living and educational levels, point toward new departures in policy, if the transition to an advanced state is to be achieved. In such a way, Mexico and other Latin-American countries might be able to play a more active and much needed role in international affairs.

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